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The MARKET GARDEN Campaign:
Allied Operational Command in Northwest Europe, 1944

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines in detail, the planning, conduct, and context of Allied Operational Command during the period from the Normandy Invasion to the end of Operation MARKET GARDEN, the airborne invasion of Holland. These campaigns were influenced by several factors: the nature of the Allied Coalition, the differing views and approach to battle of the separate services and the different nationalities within the coalition, and the actual conduct of battle within the context of a larger effort, the military campaign.

The 1944 campaign was unique in that it represented the two year evolution of a political-military coalition, whose campaign conduct in the field was overseen by a fully integrated headquarters and whose staff was composed of members of both the individual services and separate nationalities. While this headquarters presented a united front behind its admired commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, its competence to plan and control operations in anything but the broadest sense was challenged at every turn by the air and ground commanders tasked to fight the actual campaign.

This dissertation concludes that the "oversight" provided by the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, SHAEF, and its Supreme Commander, was not in tune with both operational realities and practices, and was not capable of seizing opportunity and conducting a campaign of maneuver. During the actual execution of MARKET GARDEN, the Allied Command system functioned poorly causing the operation to fail by the narrowest margins. While MARKET GARDEN has often been portrayed as a failure of one man, of intelligence, or of poor planning, the coalition system and the men who ran it were not capable of fighting a complicated battle efficiently because of their inability to function as a team, rather than as a band of brothers, the creation of which was the responsibility of the Supreme Commander.

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Introduction

This dissertation is the product of a lifetime of study and practice of the military profession and has its roots in answering a professional soldier's question, "Can an air-ground campaign be waged effectively?" I was the inquirer, then the newest and youngest instructor at the US Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The American Army was then in a time of doctrinal ferment; the Vietnam-era Army that I had joined had turned itself full-bore to the previously unthinkable concept of winning huge, armored battles in either Europe or, as some said, in the Middle East. I selected OPERATION MARKET GARDEN as a one-hour presentation to challenge my students with the question, "How do you make an Air-Land Battle work?" OPERATION MARKET GARDEN was the combined Airborne and Land invasion of Holland in September 1944, designed to give the Allies a bridgehead over the Rhine as a prelude to the final offensive to capture the Ruhr and to move on to Berlin. Conceived, planned, and launched in a period of eight days, it was one of the most complex—and because of its mixed results, controversial—operations conducted by the Allies in World War II.

I had visited the MARKET GARDEN battlefields, and had done some rudimentary study of the operation. The Staff College's library had an ample supply of documentation, and for to the Fortieth Anniversary of World War II, the College began honoring some of its famous graduates. Through this program, I met, and was granted private interviews with, several of the senior participants in MARKET GARDEN. I carried on this research during a six-year assignment in Europe, three years of which was as a War Plans officer in NATO's Central Army Group, and one

year of which was as the Special Assistant to the Commander in Chief. United States Army, Europe. Here, I learned the mechanics and difficulties of coalition planning. the problems of interservice rivalries, and the issues involved with senior leadership in a coalition. This study rests heavily on that background, as well as on a decade of further research and thinking.

This study intends to shed light on several key aspects of one of World War II's most famous and controversial operations, OPERATION MARKET GARDEN, to provide a military vista from which to study how a military campaign is planned and executed, how the professional attitudes and thinking of its commanders shape action, and how—after the final arbitration of combat itself—individual battles fit within the context of the greater effort, a military campaign.

Allied Operational Command during this period will be examined by exploring and assessing several of its key components. The basis for the Allied OPERATIONAL COMMAND, the coalition itself, will be explained in light of the conflicts inherent in combining air and ground forces within a multinational environment. These conflicts include the basic doctrines or "approaches to battle" of each service and each country based upon the experience and organizational design of each component force. Combined with the ever-present strains of strong personalities, the ability to find workable solutions by men convinced that their own service doctrine and experience is preeminent, lent itself to unhappy compromises, bitterly resented and aggressively contested. These resentments led to criticism far beyond that called for, as plans went awry and the conditions of battle negated firmly-held notions of what constituted military success.

The campaign planning process will be examined, not in its methodological sense, but in its intellectual aspects, to demonstrate how decisions were made based upon the confluence of the information available, the assets provided, and the perceived requirements of the operation under preparation. From this mental planning there rose not simply a campaign plan that was a conceptual outline for future actions, but also expectations that did not always conform to the reality of the battlefield and the enemy's reactions. This conflict between the battles envisioned and the battles fought is a key catalyst in changing a plan of campaign. How the Allies actually met this challenge will be demonstrated by examining the detail and logic of the original campaign plan, and by describing the operational results of the early battles that sparked controversy at the highest level. From this controversy rose perceptions based less on logic than on the preconceptions of plans held by resentful personalities, and advocated by men often not responsible for the actual military conduct of the operations unfolding.

During the period examined, the campaign did not go as planned, but some aspects of it exceeded the original assumptions of the planners without actually accomplishing the capture of key objectives needed to support the next phase of operations. The decision to continue the campaign as planned, and the challenge posed by the key commanders in attempting to reshape the basic conceptual framework that had been theorized by the planners at Supreme Headquarters and accepted by the Allied Supreme Commander as unalterable, posed both military and political challenges to the unity of the coalition exceeding that which might have

occurred within a single nation's forces. How this debate originated and the results of it will constitute the kernel of my discussion of the Allied campaign plan.

The mounting and execution of OPERATION MARKET GARDEN, an operation conceived to accomplish a rapid thrust across the Rhine, will be examined in the light of the detail needed to launch the operation and as a special case within the coalition where all the military factors of battle were complicated by service politics, interpersonal strife, coalition dissent, and the misconceptions of the would-be victors. These combined to produce a partial victory whose recriminations reverberate today. MARKET GARDEN itself, while only one of many decision points reached in World War II, exemplified the complicated nature of modern war fought by coalitions.

Examined in detail will be the logic of the air and ground commanders, the commander's intent and the assumptions that caused that intent to be formed, and the plans drawn by the subordinate commanders tasked with fighting the battle. Moreover, the most controversial aspects of the battle, whether there actually was "an intelligence failure," and whether the ground forces conducted themselves with the vigor and aggressiveness needed to win through to the objective, will also be examined. As part of this study, a detailed examination of the specially created "First Allied Airborne Army" will be presented—to include its background in planning operations prior to the mounting of OPERATION MARKET GARDEN—to illustrate the problems and complexity of interservice planning.

To understand the key commanders and their ideas, an in-depth discussion of each man's point of view, derived from diaries, from the official headquarters records and journals, and from living participants who witnessed the decisions made and the

plans being drawn, will be part of the analysis offered. Furthermore, excerpts from the confidential assessments of the MARKET GARDEN battle and campaign made by key participants as background to the American and British Official Historians will also be offered as part of the author's summary.

I have chosen to use, as often as possible, the actual words of the participants as an essential part of the narration, to enable the reader to participate in their thoughts and to judge their intentions and plans. Having done so, my intention is to show how operational decisions are made, to examine the factors behind decisions as the planners and commanders would have analyzed them, and to demonstrate how the evolution of a campaign is based not simply on a perfectly cast "Master Plan" but on the continuing analysis, debate, and controversy that surrounds the events of battle and the higher direction of combat operations. Having read this study, I would hope that my readers would agree with the words of one of my first mentors, repeated here by his unabashed admirer:

> Great battles, like epic tragedies, are not always staged or the product of human calculation, and disaster is less likely to derive from one gross blunder than from reasoned calculations which slip just a little.
>
> S.L.A. Marshall
> Brigadier General, USAR, Ret.
> *Night Drop: The American Airborne Invasion of Normandy*

CHAPTER ONE

No Band Of Brothers

For the Americans, there had been only one strategic object worth pursuing as part of the "Europe First" Strategy adopted by the Allies in 1941. That object, the Cross-Channel Attack on the coast of France that would permit America to employ the full weight of its mobilized army, had been a source of contention between the American Joint Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff Committee since the beginning of their deliberations. Too soon to split the coalition at the war's onset, the argument increased distrust in the partnership—a partnership cemented far more by politicians than soldiers, and embraced far more by the British who relied upon it for survival, than the Americans, for whom the German war had been thrust upon them by the Axis agreement, not the emotional scourge of a Pearl Harbor. From their first disagreements, the American commanders, despite the obvious advantages and frequent benefits of the coalition, never abandoned their contempt for, or downplaying of, contributions made by their Allies. Collectively, the senior soldiers, sailors, and airmen that oversaw the military, air, and naval campaigns of the war were no band of brothers, despite the forced cooperation of their governments.[1]

The "Grand Alliance" was a marriage of convenience, a marriage healthier in times of crisis than in good times. By 1944, with the Cross-Channel attack looming,

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[1] The most complete and balanced presentations of the national approaches to strategy are contained in the official histories of the participating countries. For the Americans, the most complete view is contained in the US Army in World War II Series Sub-series, *The War Department*, under the general editorship of Kent Roberts Greenfield, dealing with strategy, logistics, and overall organization. The British *Grand Strategy* Series edited by John Ehrman (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office) provides the Commonwealth view with a British emphasis. C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970) offers an often ignored, focused view of the Canadians' problems.

the last of the selfless, dedicated days were running out. The strains and disagreements of Grand Strategic planning, and the conduct of actual operations in the Mediterranean, set the stage for the upcoming campaign. Though victorious in the end, the operation in Northwest Europe would prove to be a contentious campaign whose disagreements would outlast the blast of war. At the root of the problem were the nature of coalitions, the command structure, and the personalities of the players themselves.[2]

The shadow of the Great War hung over the system. Along with the experience of administering and coordinating large endeavors came the memory of slights, real and imagined. American military leaders scorned any but their own ideas on the conduct of war in general and this war in particular; their political masters were more realistic.[3] With Grand Strategy firmly in the hands of the Big Three—Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Premier Joseph Stalin—the conduct of operations in the field fell to "Theater Commanders" supervised by the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) of the American and British armed forces. Following frequent conferences between Churchill and Roosevelt, the CCS worked

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[2] Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1953, 1989.) The creation of the command system and its actual employment are addressed officially in this volume of the US Army Series by the Office of the Chief of Military History (now called the Center of Military History).

[3] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed., and Stephen E. Ambrose, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years*, I (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 405, 406; Harry Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower 1942-1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946) [hereafter referred to as Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*], 29, 30. For example, Eisenhower calls the cancellation of a cross-channel attack in 1942 the "Blackest Day" in history. For a sample of American vitriol, see General Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), chapters 6-12 passim. Wedemeyer was a principal war planner in the War Department and the author of the original "Victory Plan." He later became the American Theater Commander in China; Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and US Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), passim. This examines prewar American ideas well salted with Anglophobia, and discusses war planning and the Joint Chiefs.

out the details of strategy, allocated national resources, and provided a directive to the theater commander concerned. The National Service Chief for the specific Allied Theater Commander wrote and communicated the CCS views and orders. For Northwest Europe, the United States Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, was the executive agent.[4] While certain theaters such as the Pacific (US), Southeast Asia (British), and the Mediterranean (British) were considered to grant a special oversight authority to the most interested nation, Northwest Europe was considered to be the purview of both countries. Moreover, with the British Prime Minister using, and in the American view, abusing his dual role as Defense Minister to inject himself into the conduct of operations, the Americans were firm in their attempts to end British control of the major campaigns of the war.

If 1942 had been the year of resolve, 1943 was the year of dispute. America followed Britain into an unwanted Mediterranean Campaign through the North African invasion, TORCH. TORCH had been seen as a political necessity, not only to offer some aspect of a "Second Front" to the beleaguered Soviets but also to get the American Army involved in the German war as a prelude to the congressional elections in the fall.

Every aspect of 1943's campaign irritated the Americans. Marshall viewed the Mediterranean as a "suction pump," taking resources away from the invasion of

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[4] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, Chapter 2; Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Coalitions, Politicians and Generals: Some Aspects of Command in Two Wars* (London: Brassey's UK, 1993), Chapters 9 and 10, critiques the mechanics of this arrangement; Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Doubleday, 1970); Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory 1943–1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973) Volumes 2 and 3, should also be consulted concerning the relations of the CCS and the Allied Supreme Commander.

Western Europe.[5] The Navy viewed it as a diversion from their war of vengeance in the Pacific, and the United States Army Air Forces, whose independence from the ground Army had all but been made legal by Marshall, viewed the Mediterranean campaign as delaying the massive bomber offensive it felt could win the war.

Roosevelt had overruled his service chiefs on TORCH. The resulting campaigns, not only in Sicily but in the Mediterranean—which landed the Allies on the European mainland through the Italian peninsula—had marked the high-water mark of British influence. During the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, the Allies had agreed to appoint an individual to analyze the invasion plan that the Americans demanded. (The officer appointed Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan was British. He had an American deputy, Maj. Gen. Raymond Barker.) The position was called "Chief of Staff to the Allied Commander, Designate," or "COSSAC"; the individual and the plan soon shared the same name.

In August 1943, the COSSAC forwarded his feasibility study, most often called the COSSAC Plan but in reality named OUTLINE OVERLORD. OUTLINE OVERLORD, once approved, changed the conduct of World War II. No longer content to fend off Mr. Churchill's seemingly bimonthly mid-course corrections for Grand Strategy; the Americans pressed for a decision on the Cross-Channel attack. OVERLORD's approval in August 1943, followed by the appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander and his principal commanders, put Marshall and the American Chiefs in charge of the war in its largest aspects. Every campaign, every major

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[5] Larry I. Bland, ed., *George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue* [hereafter referred to as Bland, *Reminiscences for Pogue*] (Lexington: George C. Marshall Foundation,

decision now was scrutinized through the prism of the Allied main effort. OVERLORD. While OVERLORD did not end inter-Allied bickering or even Churchill's attempt to shape Allied strategy, it did end British dominance over the military conduct of the war.

The Supreme Commander's job was the vision of the American Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall. Almost mythical in the respect he evoked from Roosevelt, Churchill, and the American Congress, Marshall was the architect of the American Army and was the most formidable advocate of the Cross-Channel Attack and the "Unity of Command" principle that had necessitated appointing a Supreme Allied Commander. A staff officer and protégé of General of the Armies John J. Pershing, the American Expeditionary Force's Commander in Chief in the Great War, Marshall was cold, distant, severe and eminently practical. He "made" every general in the American Army and was the coldest of judges. Though he developed a good working relationship with his British opposite numbers, he was never known to have praised Britain or the British to any historian and quietly accepted the bigoted xenophobia that predominated in many of his senior officers.[6]

Following the simple principle that the largest force contributor would provide the Supreme Commander for the European invasion, Marshall was expected by all to

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1986), passim. Marshall left no memoirs; these are the only known interviews of the general done as background for the authorized biography.

[6] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, is replete with discussions concerning the American view of their allies; John S.D. Eisenhower, *Allies: Pearl Harbor to D-Day* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1982) covers the formation of the coalition in less strident terms. For any serious student, the personal diaries of General Joseph W. Stilwell (Stanford), General George S. Patton (Library of Congress), and General Mark W. Clark (The Citadel) have repeated xenophobic remarks. Of particular note concerning the British should be the Wedemeyer Papers (Stanford) and his memoirs, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, ibid. On the naval side, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King was a practicing Anglophobe of legendary proportions. Marshall kept his counsel. His only candid remarks on the war are bereft of positive remarks for specific allies; see Bland, *Reminiscences for Pogue*, ibid.

include himself, to be named the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force (SCAEF). Roosevelt, buffeted by admirers of Marshall (to include the ancient Pershing) who claimed that Marshall could not be spared from Washington, relented. Marshall stayed on the Combined Chiefs to remain Roosevelt's champion at the conference table.[7]

General Sir Alan Brooke (later Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke), the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Marshall's opposite number, had been considered a contender for the Supreme Commander position. Churchill had offered the position to an American in 1943 as recognition of the greater American role (in numbers) in the war effort. Able, analytical, and blunt, Alanbrooke matched Marshall in reputation and was regarded as the necessary foil to Churchill's enthusiasms.[8] Alanbrooke's generals, unfortunately, matched American xenophobia with their own brand of arrogance and condescension, never tiring of calling their American counterparts "inexperienced."[9]

While the American Chief of Naval Operations/Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King, and his British counterpart, Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, were key members of the Combined Chiefs, their influence over the ground and air aspects of the Northwest Europe campaign diminished after the D-Day

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[7] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 22-34. Note Pogue discusses the American attempt to make Marshall the Supreme Commander for both the European and Mediterranean Theaters, and also to keep him as a sitting member of the Combined Chiefs. As such, he would have commanded the entire Allied effort against the Germans.

[8] Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds., *War Diaries 1939-1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke* [hereafter referred to as Danchev and Todman, *Alanbrooke War Diaries*] (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2001); Sir Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West, 1943-1946* (London: Collins, 1959); David Fraser, *Alanbrooke* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), passim.

decisions for Normandy and Southern France. King's effect on the European and Mediterranean campaigns was negative. He controlled the crucial construction and allotment of landing craft and LSTs (Landing Ships, Tank). His refusal to limit his own Pacific campaigns, and Roosevelt's disingenuous practice of "supporting Europe" while refusing to curb King, caused major strategic problems. In decisions not involving shipping, King deferred to General Marshall on all issues concerning the war against Germany.[10]

The airmen on the Combined Chiefs seemingly waged their own campaigns. Represented by Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles "Peter" Portal of the Royal Air Force (RAF), and General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold of the United States Army Air Forces, the airmen secured their own campaign directive for Europe called POINTBLANK.[11] Crafted at Combined Chiefs level with Portal as executive agent, it subordinated RAF Bomber Command and the United States Strategic Air Forces, Europe (USSTAF), directly to the CCS for operations. POINTBLANK was considered by the CCS as a necessary preliminary for OVERLORD, and was seen by the airmen as a guarantee that their operations could not be subordinated to those of ground forces. While the POINTBLANK directive provided a "priority" list of targets by type, the airmen were free to conduct operations within very general controls.[12]

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[9] Brian Holden Reid, "Tensions in the Supreme Command: Anti-Americanism in the British Army, 1939-1945," in Brian Holden Reid and John White, eds., *American Studies: Essays in Honour of Marcus Cunliffe* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 270-296.

[10] Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1952); Thomas B. Buel, *Master of Seapower: A Biography of Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980).

[11] General of the Air Force Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (Blue Ridge Summit, Penn.: Tab Books, 1989); Denis Richards, *Portal of Hungerford* (London: Heineman, 1977).

[12] CMH, MS, Historical Section, Headquarters, USFET, *Outline Chronology of Notes on the History of Continental Operations, E.T.O.*, Volume II (Historical Section, Headquarters, USFET, n.d.), 223-227;

Bomber Command's Commander-in-Chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris, and the American air commander, Lt. Gen. Carl A. "Tooey" Spaatz, were both outspoken and independent believers in the superiority of airpower. Spaatz believed that the OVERLORD operation was unnecessary. While Bomber Command's aircraft were generally confined to night operations launched from England, Spaatz held operational control over both the Eighth Air Force in England and the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. Spaatz had been commander of the Northwest African Air Force during TORCH and the Mediterranean campaign and administratively commanded all US Army Air Forces in Europe, bestowing some influence over the American elements of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces as Arnold's trusted agent in the German war.[13]

Harris and Spaatz also shared a unique advantage. Spaatz reported not only to the American theater commander but directly to Arnold as Commanding General, United States Army Air Forces (AAF), a separate component of the United States Army. Harris, at Bomber Command, reported directly to the Air Ministry, Portal being the professional head of the Air Force and his superior. The implication was clear. Regardless of "theater" command structures, the airmen had direct access not only to their service superiors but to the Combined Chiefs. POINTBLANK covered a multitude of sins, the greatest of which was the "negotiation" the theater commander needed to do with airmen for support.

Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany 1939-1945*, Volume III, Part V (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), Chapter XII, passim.

[13] Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe* (Washington: Center for Air Force History, 1993), Part Four, passim. The numbered air forces, therefore, under Spaatz's influence were the 8th and 15th as part of USSTAF, and the 9th and 12th (Tactical) Air Forces.

On December 7, 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was named Supreme Commander for OVERLORD. Eisenhower was the choice of Franklin Roosevelt and was embraced enthusiastically by Churchill as the best possible candidate for the job. Eisenhower's own reputation with the people of America and Britain, and with the Allied press, was flawless. Since his appointment as the Allied Supreme Commander for TORCH, Eisenhower had been seen as the international symbol for the coalition. Victory had followed his flag in French North Africa, in Sicily, and onto the European continent during the Invasion of Italy. Untainted by the stalemate yet to develop in front of the Gustav Line and Anzio in Italy, Eisenhower left the Mediterranean theater as the symbol of Allied success.[14]

Eisenhower was not the only commander picked by the CCS. (See figure 1 and 2.) The Allies, wanting an airman as Deputy Supreme Commander, selected Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder, who had been Allied Air Commander in the Mediterranean. Tedder relished the "Deputy" title, but he also wanted operational command of all air assets for the invasion. This job, had in fact, been filled before Eisenhower was appointed. In August 1943, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory, then serving as the Commander of Fighter Command, and a commander who had been deeply involved in invasion and Combined Operations planning since 1942, was appointed as the Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces (AEAF).[15]

The Americans made it clear that they would not accept "a ground commander." This job had fallen to General Sir Harold L. Alexander in the

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[14] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 33-35.

[15] Ibid., 48.

Mediterranean, first as Eisenhower's Deputy, and then as the 15th Army Group Commander in Sicily and Italy. No senior American ground commander existed with the commensurate combat experience to fill an "Army Group" command, so by default, the British 21 Army Group was accepted as the de facto ground headquarters until sufficient American ground troops required a promotion or new assignment for an American commander.[16]

The ground commander appointed to 21 Army Group was General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, former commander of the Eighth Army. [17] Montgomery was a talisman for the British soldier, and a remarkably popular commander with the British people. "Monty" meant victory to the British public, and to the average Tommy. Monty was a commander who brought victory without excessive casualties. His victories had assured Churchill's continuance in government during the dark days of 1942. Eisenhower had wanted the pleasant and pliant Harold Alexander for this command but stated that Montgomery was "acceptable."[18]

The Allied Naval Commander, Allied Naval Expeditionary Force (ANXF), was Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, a professional seaman who had saved the British Army at Dunkirk, and whose professionalism and affability made him popular with every Allied seaman. During postinvasion operations, he would be the key naval

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[16] Ibid., 43-45, *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1609, 1610.

[17] As such, Montgomery replaced General Sir Bernard Paget, who had also been the senior British Army planner for the (British) Combined Commanders, had succeeded Alanbrooke in command of the Home Forces, and became 21 Army Group commander in 1943. With the exception of the abortive Norway expedition in 1940, he lacked experience of operational command in combat.

[18] General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1949), 211.

advisor concerning ports and shipping for the theater as well as the coordinator of Allied naval operations in support of ground forces.[19]

Eisenhower brought his own Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith; his G-2, Major General Kenneth Strong; and a host of minor appointments from his Mediterranean headquarters. Marshall had chosen the G-3, Major General Harold R. Bull, the man who was expected to be Marshall's G-3. Marshall also selected Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley to lead the American First Army. Tentatively, Bradley was dual-hatted to create a "First Army Group" Headquarters, though its permanent commander was not named. Bradley expected to move up to that command. His success as an army commander would determine that; his promotion was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Other appointments in the theater included British Second Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Sir Miles C. Dempsey, a former corps commander under Montgomery. Lt. Gen. Harry H. G. Crerar was named to command Canadian First Army; he had been the Chief of Staff in Ottawa and had commanded the 1 Canadian Corps for a short period in Italy. His deputy, Major-General Guy Simonds at 2 Canadian Corps, was the most battle experienced of the Canadian commanders. Lt. Gen. George S. Patton commanded the American Third Army. Having been relieved of command of Seventh Army after the Sicilian Campaign for slapping two soldiers, Patton by seniority and experience might have had the American Army Group command. His tempestuous temper and rampant xenophobia had ruled out the appointment, but Eisenhower had

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[19] Robert W. Love, Jr. and John Major, eds., *The Year of D-Day: The 1944 Diary of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay* [hereafter referred to as Love and Major, *Ramsay Diary*] (Hull: University of Hull

retained him. Bradley, his superior at "First Army Group," had not wanted Patton in the theater. Eisenhower had not consulted Bradley concerning this. Patton also functioned as the "commander" of a mythical Army Group under the FORTITUDE deception plan, aimed at deceiving the Germans into believing the main Allied landings would be in the Pas de Calais area.[20]

The American Ninth Air Force in England had moved from the Mediterranean with Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton as its commander. Eisenhower also brought Lt. Gen. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle to command the Eighth Air Force. Other Mediterranean commanders that migrated to England for OVERLORD included desert airmen Air Marshals Arthur "Maori" Coningham and Harry Broadhurst, who commanded the 2 Tactical Air Force and 83 Group respectively.[21]

As assigned, Eisenhower's commanders were the most experienced, proven combat commanders of any Allied theater. None were strangers to combined operations, to high-level command, or to the press of battle. While a host of lesser, unproven commanders rounded out the subordinate commands, the key leaders all had the confidence of their services and countries but not, necesssarily, of one another.

Press, 1994); Rear-Admiral W.S. Chalmers, *Full Cycle: The Biography of Sir Bertram Home Ramsay* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959).

[20] MHI, *Papers of Chester B. Hansen: Bradley Commentaries*. These are unnumbered notecards containing questions, comments, and answers prepared by General Bradley in response to his "ghost" author, Lt. Col. Chester B. Hansen. Hansen, Bradley's aide and keeper of the *Hansen Diary*, drafted Bradley's memoir, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Holt, 1951). Bradley held Patton in contempt for his conduct in Sicily. Numerous comments concerning this and his distrust of Patton and his motives can be found in the commentaries.

[21] Vincent Orange, *Coningham: A Biography of Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham* (Washington: Center for Air Force History, 1992), passim. The fulsome foreword to the American edition notes he "is the architect of modern airpower." British Army officers universally thought Broadhurst to be more effective and cooperative, and that he was the actual airman running combat operations.

The Allied Command was, after all, a coalition. Publicly, the coalition faced challenges together, and sensitivities were respected. Controversy, while aired through national channels, was well known, but above all, attempts to make decisions adversarial at the Combined Chiefs level were avoided. For the Americans, in particular, having been chastened by their own Commander-in-Chief over TORCH, the Chiefs had learned to agree to disagree. Inwardly, they held grudges that never healed. Battles, then, were fought not simply in the meeting room but between field commanders whose own service chiefs saw them as "champions" of their national and service points of view.

The differing national views on command posed significant problems at the operational level. "Unity of Command" as defined by the Americans mandated that one Allied commander hold supreme command in each theater of operations. Unlike the Great War, national commanders were not given the right to appeal decisions directly to their governments, though this policy remained unofficially in force through national representatives on the Combined Chiefs. At no time during the war did any government overrule a Supreme Commander's decisions by CCS action prompted by a commander's disagreement, nor was any Supreme Commander relieved as unsuitable to the approval of America or Britain. While disagreements were common, and frequently feelings ran high, commanders obeyed orders regardless of what they felt would be the military consequences of decisions.[22]

Essential to maintaining the command, however, was that senior commanders remain free to act within the purview of their own authority within their own

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[22] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 41.

commands. This was challenging in that the British demanded to work within a system naming a separate senior commander responsible for air, ground, and naval operations, essentially subordinating all nations by service to one command, a tighter description of "Unity of Command." While the Americans always held the Supreme Command position in the war against Germany, the separate commands had fallen to senior, experienced British officers. This was deeply resented by the Americans, who did not accept the "experience" argument—nor were their ideas on warfare congruent with those of Commonwealth officers. By 1944, with the preponderance of combat forces for the first time shifting to the Americans, this brought about near revolt by the American commanders whose views, through press leaks or divination, were frequently the subject of American press discontent with British influence in running the war. Roosevelt, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, and Marshall were adamant that 1944 would be an American year—that once the invasion was launched, Britain and her commanders would have no influence and little say in the strategy of the war.[23]

Despite its position as land base for the invasion and host to more than 200 airfields for the American air force and its contribution as the dominant U-boat killer and escort force in the Atlantic war, custodian and primary producer of special signals intelligence (ULTRA), and deliverer of the tremendous weight of bombs dropped on Germany by Bomber Command, Britain's dwindling ground force was seen as making

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[23] This is borne out by the American refusal to reconsider ANVIL, even at the peril of OVERLORD, Marshall's refusal to accept a British officer as Ground Commander, and Marshall's and Stimson's ire during the Normandy campaign over newspaper stories reflecting "British dominance" of the war. From OVERLORD onward, it also became Eisenhower's task to virtually refuse any direct pleas for decisions or actions in favor of a British view to be taken to the Combined Chiefs. For an example, see Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 225-226.

Britain the decisively junior partner in the war in Northwest Europe. Britain's manpower issues, as well as those of Canada (which Ottawa kept to themselves), also became prime considerations for any operations launched. Britain could not afford major casualties if it was to fight to the end of the war, a fact the Anglophobic American press frequently used by claiming the British were "not pulling their weight." American generals habitually and disparagingly used the word "caution" regarding British attempts to avoid unproductive blood-lettings, as had been common in World War I. It was also used as a blanket insult to describe any American doctrinal or philosophical differences with the British approach to battle.

The last point was a major philosophical difference. American generals had a virtual blank check on losing both men and equipment. No American generals were threatened or relieved due to heavy losses; only outright failure or national embarrassment brought on sackings. From 1943 onwards, British generals were warned that manpower shortages would require the "cannibalizing" of major formations to provide replacements.[24] Moreover, as the war lengthened, with bombardment by planes and soon missiles, rigid rationing, the mass mobilization of women, and the return to the colors of middle-aged Great War veterans, Britain's national psyche was particularly vulnerable. Its press trumpeted any success of British arms, real or, in the minds of the Americans, "stolen" from themselves. Its war leaders—Churchill, Slim, Mountbatten, and Montgomery—often spoke of "morale" as the magic formula to keep the nation functioning.

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[24] F.W. Perry, *The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organisation in Two World Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), Chapters 2 and 4; The War Office, *Manpower Problems: The Second World War 1939-1945, Army* (London: 1949); Stacey, *Arms, Men and*

Yet, how this morale was achieved, too, was a key irritant within the coalition. American generals read British newspapers and heard BBC broadcasts, and stupidly believed that such organs should have been dedicated to the glorification of the American war effort and the triumph of American arms. They resented any positive comments that either compared favorably British arms or downplayed or excluded American contributions.[25] American newspapers were likewise not as objective or all-encompassing in their coverage of the war, though these, of course, did not appear within the theater. They were, however, a frequent stimulus to Stimson and Marshall, who reported to Eisenhower the criticism of columnists during the first months of the invasion that the British were controlling the war.[26]

Most prominent among command issues at the operational level were those inspired by personalities, and by the inherent prejudices held among the separate services. Compounded by nationalistic views, these issues—not those of strategic policy handed down by the heads of government and formulated as plans and military directives by the Combined Chiefs—posed the greatest problem to senior command functioning. In the realm of operations, the actual conduct of military actions designed to support the strategy handed down by accomplishing tasks, achieving objectives, and

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Governments, Chapter 7; Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy* (New York: Dutton, 1983); Chapter 15 is of particular interest.

[25] During separate interviews in the early 1980s with two prominent US wartime commanders, Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin and Gen. J. Lawton Collins, the author was stunned by their voluntary and emphatic comments on the British press during the war. This, they both volunteered, had caused great problems over "who was winning the war."

[26] G.E. Patrick Murray, *Eisenhower Versus Montgomery: The Continuing Debate* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 12, 19, 171. Murray assesses the postwar fight of the memoirs, as well as the problems encountered during the war, including those of public opinion; Larry I. Bland, ed., and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, assoc. ed., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, IV, "Aggressive and Determined Leadership," June 1, 1943-December 31, 1944 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 550-551.

establishing a jumping-off position in time or place for the next sequenced action called for by the strategy—this was the most intense environment in the coalition.

Operational commanders had to harmonize the actions of combined services in battles and multiphased operations. Moreover, while strategy had the benefit of modification over time, operations were immediate, their results stark. Operations succeeded, failed, or were jumping-off phases to new operations. With the immediacy of time and the gauge of success the ruling standard, pressures on commanders magnified differences among commanders. Given the disparate personalities, services, and nationalities involved, conflict was commonplace and was most intense among the senior commanders.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Supreme Commander, fell between two stools. As the executor of the Combined Chiefs of Staff's directives, he straddled strategic and operational commands. Since 1942, he had dealt in the ethereal realm of pleasing two political bosses, while retaining the confidence of his military superior, Marshall, as well as at least the nominal support of the CIGS, Alanbrooke.

Eisenhower was uniquely qualified to participate in the "Higher Direction of War," but was not accepted as a field commander by the British. Eisenhower had graduated in the famous West Point Class of 1915, the class the "stars fell on." By dint of age and opportunity, this class supplied the Army with 58 generals, including the senior American ground commander for the invasion, Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley. Commanding the US Army's tank training camp in World War I, Eisenhower missed the Great War. Marked early as a man of ability, Eisenhower distinguished himself in

the next two decades in two realms, neither of them in connection with the leading of troops in the field.[27]

Eisenhower became a star in the burgeoning Army school system, distinguishing himself at the Command and General Staff School, the War College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Trained as a General Staff officer, he served both the Assistant Secretary of War, and later Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur, both in Washington and later in Manila. Promoted to colonel in 1940, he briefly commanded a regiment and was the Chief of Staff for Third Army during the Louisiana Maneuvers, serving under Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, arguably the Army's best tactician and trainer.

Following Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was selected to head the War Plans Division of the War Department Operations section, thus becoming the principal overseer of the Army's strategic plans. Chosen by Marshall to establish the groundwork for the Cross-Channel attack, he was named Commanding General, European Theater of Operations in June 1942. As such, he was the principal planner acting for Marshall with the War Office Staff in London.

Eisenhower, once described by his son as "intense," was ambitious, energetic, high strung, and an efficient administrator. Highly intelligent, he had spent most of his career serving the great. One of his contemporaries who commanded a battalion, while Ike acted as brigade executive officer, noted that Eisenhower told him that his motto

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[27] Eisenhower did not attend his own branch school for infantry, which focused on the tactics of that arm from platoon to regimental level. The staff school centered on division and corps operations. The War College, in Eisenhower's time, dealt with "strategy" and the preparation of war plans. The Industrial College dealt with the industrial mobilization of the United States. Combined with his

was, "The Commanding Officer is never wrong with me." [28] That trait never left him, and Eisenhower showed remarkable skill in adhering to the smallest ideas of his commander. Marshall, whom Eisenhower served, had carefully tested and selected someone who could act not simply on the boss's wishes, but who could perceive, predict, and perform exactly how his superior thought. Fortified with an endless number of messages from the War Department, Eisenhower acted as if he were still down the hall from his Chief. While he realized the necessity to succeed, his mental test of every decision no doubt had to be, "What would Marshall say?" [29] A perfect follower himself, he deeply resented the two Army Group Commanders unafraid to stand up to him, Montgomery and Devers.

Eisenhower proved to be an ideal subordinate to Marshall's ideas during his time in London. Alanbrooke noted that his first meetings with Eisenhower had literally made no impression.[30] This rapidly changed as the Americans pressed not only for action in 1942 but for a landing in France called SLEDGEHAMMER. As Eisenhower's duties involved him with planning the second front, Churchill and others soon saw the American in conferences and as advocate for the War Department's and Marshall's views. SLEDGEHAMMER and ROUNDUP, the two

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service both with the civilian and military heads of the Army, Eisenhower was exceptionally well prepared in the theoretical and policy realms of warfare.

[28] Brig. Gen. Bradforth Chynoweth, *Bellamy Park* (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1975), 101.

[29] Graham and Bidwell, *Coalitions*, 177, notes that Marshall ensured "Eisenhower acted as if he were the great Chief of the Army Staff's deputy, and his loyal agent." The thousands of pages of message traffic from the War Department to SHAEF and the personal and official correspondence of the two men bear this out. Joseph P. Hobbs, *Dear General: Eisenhower's Wartime Letters to Marshall* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), offers a selection of letters from the published *Eisenhower Papers*, with commentary on the relationship of the two men.

[30] Danchev and Todman, *Alanbrooke War Diaries*, 276.

primary plans advocated by the Americans, were produced by Brigadier General Eisenhower's Plans Division before he moved to London.[31]

TORCH, seen by the Americans as the substitute for ROUNDUP, was placed under Eisenhower's command, and he was promoted to lieutenant general. TORCH demonstrated Eisenhower's obeisance to Marshall. He ably supported Marshall's intentions while establishing a completely integrated coalition headquarters, setting a model that would be repeated throughout the Mediterranean and Northwest Europe campaigns.[32]

Eisenhower also established his pattern of giving priority to political-military requirements rather than operational requirements. The North Africa experience showed that the Supreme Commander had little time to intensively supervise a ground campaign. Following the winter stalemate in front of Tunis, Alanbrooke ensured that a senior British commander, General the Hon. H.R.L.G. Alexander, became the senior ground commander, essentially taking Eisenhower out of the direct operational chain of command.[33]

Tunisia, however, was a watershed in Allied command relations. The American setback in the Kasserine Pass battles painted the American command

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[31] J.M.A. Gwyer, *Grand Strategy*, III, Part I (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), Chapters XXIV, XXVIII; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953).

[32] *Eisenhower Papers, I, II*, passim. Eisenhower reported his every move and decision to Marshall and continued to function almost as a member of Marshall's operations staff. While it was apparent that the British would have to approve Eisenhower's general conduct, the pattern of telling Marshall everything and his Allies only what was required was established during this time frame. Eisenhower's insistence on almost dual chairmanship of major staff functions is described both in Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 49-55, Chapters III and IV; and in Frederick Morgan, *Overture to Overlord* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), Chapter IX.

[33] Danchev and Todman, *Alanbrooke War Diaries*, 365. Eisenhower was charmed by Alexander despite his job to keep Eisenhower isolated from operational influence.

structure in a bad light, as well as prompting American discontent with the British Army commander. The arrival of Patton brought a foil to what was seen as British condescension. Bradley's replacement of Patton, and his insistence on an American task in the final drive after Alexander had attempted to pinch out the American Corps, brought American feelings to a fever pitch. The drive on Bizerte had established American competence in their own eyes. To the British, they remained, in too many mouths, "our Italians."[34]

The incipient hostility between air and ground commanders budded during Coningham's handling of American air units and his argument over air support with George Patton.[35] From Tunisia onwards, the AAF and RAF grew together in defining air–ground operations, in which the Americans would eventually surpass their teachers. The RAF and British Army were driven farther apart as the Mediterranean war went on, mainly due to Coningham's and Tedder's personal resentment of Montgomery.[36]

The subsequent American actions of Patton's Seventh Army in Sicily worsened feelings. Patton saw the campaign as a "horse race" designed to bring himself, and hence the Americans, glory. Bad feelings continued onto the Italian

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[34] MHI, *Bradley Commentaries* depicts the deep American resentment of "British treatment" of the Americans. See also *Hansen Diary* for the period March-May 1943.

[35] Orange, *Coningham*, 144-149; Daniel R. Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations: World War II Close Air Support North Africa* (Washington: Office of Air Force History/US Army Center for Military History, 1987), 84-88. Patton, who wanted direct control of air units, was wrong, and Coningham's insistence on centralizing air to support the main effort was correct. Patton falsely painted the incident as American-British squabble; in reality, it was a doctrinal argument wherein Patton followed US doctrine soon to be replaced by FM 100-20, *Command and Employment of Air Power.*

[36] D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 218-220, passim; Orange, *Coningham*, passim; author interview with Vincent Orange, 1997, concerning his forthcoming biography of Tedder; Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield: Monty's War Years 1942-1944* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1983), passim.

peninsula with the entry into operational command of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, another close Eisenhower friend, whose Anglophobia matched Patton's.[37]

Throughout, Eisenhower attempted to appear to be an honest broker. He earned the respect of the Allied staff and the loyalty of the three operational commanders in chief, all British officers. He impressed the CIGS as an overall Allied coordinator, but not as a commander. It is logical that American and British policies and commanders would clash—the armies, after all, were cut from far different cloths. One individual commander seemed to be a firestarter, a lightning rod for contempt, controversy, and counterargument. That individual was Alanbrooke's trusted protégé, General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery, commander of the then legendary Eighth Army.

Montgomery had reached the summit of his career by dint of unyielding professionalism. Blunt, opinionated, and a quick study, Montgomery's ruthlessly analytical mind fed an outspoken manner, not designed to please superiors or Allies. In the Great War he had risen from decorated and wounded platoon leader to Division Chief of Staff. He had served under the war's great set-piece attack specialist, General Herbert Plumer, and had learned the value of organization, training, and planning. In the interwar, he had revised the Army's infantry manual, had twice been a staff college instructor of some repute, had participated in both gas trials and amphibious warfare tests, and had seen active service in Ireland and Palestine. No mossback, he had embraced airpower and motorization, and had experimented with the use of

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[37] Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark* (New York: Congdon and Weed, 1984). Clark's diary is full of references to the "poor dumb British," and he consistently accuses them of "lack of drive." In June

airborne forces while in Corps Command in England. His performance in France in 1940, and during the frenetic preparations to meet an expected German invasion, had cemented Alanbrooke's confidence in his operational abilities.[38]

Montgomery's personality was both a blessing and a curse. Confident, earnest, and egocentric, he inspired great loyalty from subordinates and hatred from those who opposed or who tried to control him. His personal ruthlessness with the ungifted had merited a fear of him by many, but his attempts to bolster morale and to achieve victories, while avoiding the profitless waste of life that had characterized his view of the Great War, had earned him an almost messianic following among British soldiers and the British public. He seemed to evoke instant contempt from American generals while contralily being popular with US soldiers whose units he visited and later commanded.[39]

Central to the divide among the ground commanders by nationality is the figure of Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, the commander of US First Army and later 12th Army Group. As such, he led the American forces in the Normandy campaign and would be the key ground force commander on the continent with the largest body of national troops. Unlike his contemporary commanders, Montgomery and Devers,

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1944, he deliberately disobeyed the orders of his superior, Harold Alexander, regarding operations to seize Rome. Nothing was done.

[38] Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General, 1887-1942* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1981); The War Office, *Infantry Training*, Volume II, *War* (London: War Office, 1931).

[39] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 596, cites a letter from Bedell Smith regarding Montgomery's visits of US troops. Current memoirs, colored by the "Greatest Generation" craze in nostalgia, and influenced by the 1950s wave of telling their sons that "America won the war," have a distinctly Anglophobic tinge to them, with Montgomery often named by men whose ranks and positions would have scarcely made them aware of the man other than through newspaper pictures. In interviews in 1983 and 1984 with Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin and Gen. J. Lawton Collins, both told the author that they "liked" Monty, and that he was "good to work for," though both were quick to point out that they didn't necessarily agree with his battle tactics. Gavin commented that he had seen Monty frequently at

Bradley commanded a pure national force generally free of "in house" national sensitivities.[40] Beginning with his experience in Tunisia, Bradley began to harbor distinctly anti-British feelings, and took umbrage at slights real and imagined from his Allies. Like most American generals, he held French colonial troops in contempt. Patton's self-styled competition with Montgomery soured Bradley on both men. Fanned by his own growing press as the "G.I. General," Bradley saw himself as the protector of US prerogatives and prestige. Any decision that favored anyone but 12th Army Group he typified as "anti-American."[41]

Bradley, a career infantryman, had seen little troop service. He had missed the Great War, and had spent most of the interwar period either attending or serving at the Army's schools. This included service under George C. Marshall at the Infantry School and extensive service at his alma mater, West Point. He was the first officer of the Class of 1915 to be promoted to brigadier general. Soft-spoken, and outwardly kind, he was a humorless taskmaster and was quick to relieve general officers. He had been an extraordinarily good corps commander in Tunisia and Sicily and was an able infantry tactician. Undemonstratively but ardently ambitious, like Eisenhower he was a mindless follower of the "boss is always right" philosophy, though it might be

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the front during the Ardennes, and that he had never seen his own American Army commander during the battle.

[40] The sole exception to this was the assignment of the French 2d Armored Division to Bradley's army. Montgomery commanded American, British, Czech, Canadian and Polish forces within 21 Army Group. Devers commanded both a US and a French army.

[41] MHI, *Bradley Commentaries*, passim; General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951); Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983). The clearest statements of Bradley's feelings and prejudices are recorded in the question-and-answer interplay between Bradley and his aide and ghostwriter, Lt. Col. Chester B. Hansen. The more subdued but distinctly anti-Montgomery version was published in Bradley's memoir, *A Soldier's Story*. A more shrill and undependable posthumously-written and co-authored set of "memoirs" was later published with Clay Blair. The day-to-day barometer, often distant, is the *Hansen Diary*.

argued he grew to see the real "boss" as Marshall, the American, rather than Eisenhower, the Allied general.[42]

Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers had outranked Eisenhower in the regular army and had followed Eisenhower as Commander of the European Theater of Operations in late 1943; he later was Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean. He was chosen to lead the Southern France campaign and would eventually be an Army Group Commander under SCAEF. Eisenhower possessed a distinct but unclarified prejudice against Devers.[43] It is possible that Eisenhower resented his refusal to send American bombers to the Mediterranean while he was overseeing the American buildup in England. Whatever the reason, Eisenhower tended to avoid giving responsibility to those who were not "in his camp." The upshot was a remarkable set of military decisions that defied logic—made solely to diminish Devers' role in the Northwest Europe campaign.[44]

Unable to ignore Montgomery because of his status as senior Commonwealth Commander, Eisenhower attempted to downplay Devers' influence and would abandon any reasoned attempt at creating Army Group sectors based on terrain, basing them instead on his personal attitude to commanders.

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[42] Bradley kept a close ear to Washington views, was careful to expound his pro-American message during Marshall's visits, and confirmed his "aggressiveness" in person to Marshall by expressing his strong desire to fight in the Pacific after the European campaign had finished. Bradley, though critical of Eisenhower after the war, went to great lengths to visit his boss and, of the three Army Group commanders, was the only one who acted as confidante for the Supreme Commander.

[43] EL, Interview with Devers. It is telling that Devers, when interviewed by the Eisenhower Library and asked about Eisenhower's leadership abilities, replied that he was unfamiliar with them.

[44] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2467-2469. Eisenhower's rating of Devers after his opposition to Ike's plans to withdraw from the Colmar Pocket in the Alsace Campaign were stinging, and in large measure uncalled-for. In this February 1945 rating of officers' contributions to the war, he rated Devers 24th of his generals.

The airmen posed a special personality problem within the coalition. In addition to the expected normal strong personalities, a consistent tension existed between the airmen and the ground soldiers. The Royal Air Force had achieved status as a separate service from the British Army in 1918. Airmen, however, used the term "independent." It was an article of faith that not only were the airmen "separate," but they would not be subordinated to their sister services. The American Army Air Force, although reorganized as one of the Army's major components in 1942, was still an organic component of the Army.[45] Arnold owed his sitting status on the CCS to the need to provide an opposite number to Portal. Arnold acted independently, as if a service chief, though he deferred to Marshall—except on issues concerning air, whereupon he acted with equal status. It was widely believed that the AAF would become a separate service after the war.[46]

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder was Eisenhower's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander. As such, he was the senior airman in the theater, though he served as a Deputy without portfolio. Tedder was an organizer and technocrat. His service during the Great War was distinguished but not exceptional. During the interwar he had specialized in the development and acquisition of aircraft. He had become Air Officer Commander-in-Chief, (AOC-in-C), Mediterranean, and had demonstrated a genius for organization, logistics, and strategy in the employment of air forces in the

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[45] In March 1942, Marshall had streamlined the army by reorganizing it into the Army Ground Forces (AGF), Army Service Forces (ASF), and Army Air Forces (AAF). The ASF and AAF retained command authority over like units regardless of theater. The ground forces were assigned from the Zone of the Interior (ZI) to each respective theater commander. The dual reporting system, designed to bring efficiency to a service fighting worldwide, was a bone of contention between every theater commander and the War Department in Washington.

[46] Herman S. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force 1943-1947* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1984).

Mediterranean campaign. Appointed Eisenhower's Allied Air Commander in 1943, he formed a close partnership with the American and retained Eisenhower's friendship and support.[47]

Tedder's appointment as Deputy pleased Eisenhower but foretold problems within the command structure. Tedder, a firm disciple of Lord Trenchard, did not view the army favorably. In fact, he claimed that he was the actor who had placed the wedge between the American Army and its Air Forces, who by doctrine "supported" the ground arms.[48] His ability to cooperate was very much seen through RAF–Azure eyes. While his service feelings may have intensified the feelings, Tedder despised Montgomery, and never missed an opportunity to criticize him to Eisenhower, Portal, his "old friend and protector" Trenchard, or the staff. Working to undermine him, he would also try to engineer Montgomery's relief. Moreover, he sought to expand his own brief by attempting to control the USSTAF through Eisenhower, and also to unseat the CCS appointed tactical air commander, Leigh Mallory.[49]

Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory had been appointed on Portal's recommendation to the position of AOC-C-in-C, Allied Expeditionary Air Forces

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[47] Author interview with Vincent Orange, the Pentagon, 1997. The author gained valuable insight from Orange into Tedder and his feelings toward Montgomery.

[48] Roderick Owen, *Tedder* (London: Collins, 1952), 196-207. Tedder viewed his role in the Mediterranean as educating Eisenhower on air power. The Americans viewed their change in doctrine as the result of their own ideas. Lt. Gen. E.R. Quesada mentioned to the author that the Americans owed much of their techniques and ideas to the British Desert Air Force.

[49] D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, Chapter 4. D'Este has the most complete discussion of interservice and interpersonal relations among senior commanders for Northwest Europe available in a credible, objective source. While the author has had the benefit of examing diaries and corresponding with or interviewing several of the war commanders still alive in the early 1980s, it must be noted that D'Este and Nigel Hamilton were the last two authors to interview those close to the war commanders before their ages took them. I am grateful to extensive discussions with both these historians over the past decade and admit their influence. Final judgments expressed, however, are unabashedly my own.

(AEAF) in August 1943, receiving his directive in November.[50] Leigh Mallory had been commander of Fighter Command and had held operational command positions since 1937. He had the experience of Combined Operations in supporting the ill-fated Dieppe landing, and had been planning the second front as part of the Combined Commanders.[51]

Leigh Mallory was considered stuffy and distant but was professional and thoroughly capable. He had been a premier developer of Army Cooperation within the RAF, and had participated in the famous 1918 Amiens tank action as a supporting air squadron commander. He had been Commandant of the School of Army Air Cooperation. Leigh Mallory was despised by Tedder, who attempted to block his appointment, and then to unseat him. Tedder poisoned Eisenhower against Leigh Mallory, and combined with Spaatz to attempt to have him removed. Failing official action, he appointed his favored subordinate Air Marshal "Maori" Coningham as the "AOC, Advanced Headquarters, AEAF," as a way to eliminate Montgomery's coordination with him. Tedder urged Spaatz to refuse to serve under Leigh Mallory, and managed to acquire the power to coordinate strategic bombers under his role as

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[50] NAC, RG 24, Volume 20420, File 969(D4), COSSAC (43) 81, 16 November 1943, Directive to Air Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Air Force. The directive stated that he was "to exercise operational command over the BRITISH and AMERICAN Tactical Air Forces, supporting the invasion of North-West EUROPE from the United Kingdom." Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 13, 14, 48.

[51] AWC, MS, *Royal Air Force Narrative: The Liberation of North West Europe, 1944–1945* [hereafter referred to as *RAF Narrative*], *Volume I* "The Planning and Preparation of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force for the Landings in Normandy" (London: Air Historical Branch, the Air Ministry, n.d.). Chapters 1 and 2 cover the organization of AEAF and the formation of 2 Tactical Air Force (2 TAF); Bill Newton Dunn, *Big Wing: The Biography of Air Chief Marshall Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory* (Shrewsbury: Airlife Publishing, 1992). This book is largely based on the *Leigh Mallory Diary*, which is heavily excerpted in the book. The original diary includes only the period from 5 June 1944 to 15 August 1944.

Deputy, SCAEF. Apparently, he had hoped to acquire Leigh Mallory's portfolio, by eliminating AEAF.[52]

Coningham proved an additional problem. Hating both the Army and Montgomery, he sabotaged any attempts to streamline or facilitate Army-Air cooperation.[53] While attempting to undermine Leigh Mallory, he would eventually attempt to cripple Army-Air relations by trying to relieve the AOCs of both 83 and 84 Groups, both of whom "cooperated" with the Army. While he did engineer the relief of the 84 Group commander, he was unsuccessful in dealing with Harry Broadhurst, the popular, cooperative, and dynamic commander of 83 Group, who was a personal favorite of Monty's and esteemed by the ground commanders he supported.[54]

Spaatz added further fuel to the air command fire by informing Leigh Mallory's deputy, an American, that his loyalty was to the Americans and not to his commander. Subsequently relieved on Leigh Mallory's demand, the new American deputy, Maj. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, proved willfully ineffective in aiding Leigh

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[52] Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 294, 309-319; Air Vice-Marshal E.J. Kingston-McCloughry, *The Direction of War: A Critique of the Political Direction and High Command in War* (New York: Praeger, 1955), 116-135.

[53] Quesada Interview, 1984. Lt. Gen. E.R. Quesada, Commander of IX Tactical Air Command in Northwest Europe, and a close associate of Coningham, told the author that Coningham's hatred of the British Army was vocal and constant, and that he was surprised that Coningham was not relieved. Admitting that Coningham had taught him much, he said that Coningham's motto was not to support any action that the army told him to support, and to cooperate only if he had been part of the planning and conception.

[54] NAC, RG 24, *Churchill Mann Papers*, "Lecture on Air Support."

Mallory.[55] Taken together, the airmen formed a virtual "Mediterranean Mafia," with Leigh Mallory the odd man out.[56]

While the principals came to the table unhappy with one another, they were, at least during the OVERLORD planning stage, able to cooperate to plan and mount the invasion. In this effort, Eisenhower's role as coordinator and arbiter was essential. Cooperation, however, was further impeded by something that rank, position, organization, or even nationality could not solve, i.e. the differing "approach to battle" philosophies that each service and nationality held. While Eisenhower sought to separate nations and services along operational lines, the operational level often required a harmonization or synchronization of effort that was affected greatly by the tactics and equipment of each arm. Given the tendency to compare each other's efforts negatively, this was the foundation of much unwarranted criticism at command levels within the Allied camp.

During the planning stage, this first manifested itself within the air command structure. Tedder correctly convinced Eisenhower that as theater commander, he should hold the operational direction of the strategic bombers, a command authority that Eisenhower had great trouble obtaining from the CCS. Given the authority to have strategic bombers operate "under the direction" of SCAEF, Eisenhower's first challenge was to settle the dispute over their employment. Tedder improved on Leigh

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[55] Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 354-355; Philip S. Meilinger, *Vandenberg: The Life of a General* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 44-45.

[56] The principal "Mediterranean-experienced" senior air commanders were Tedder, Spaatz, Doolittle, Brereton, Coningham, Vandenberg, and Broadhurst. Only Harris, who was entrenched at Bomber Command, shared Leigh Mallory's lack of Mediterranean experience.

Mallory's interdiction programme, creating a new design called the Transportation Plan.[57]

This plan was contested by Arnold's airman, Carl Spaatz. He believed that USSTAF could not only drive the Luftwaffe from the skies by direct assault against Germany's economic targets, but also drive Germany from the war. The key target to bring defeat, Spaatz held, was Germany's oil and petroleum production, not simply in oil fields but in the plants for synthetic oil.[58]

Eisenhower's fight to obtain control of the air did not produce a tangible decision to attack transportation until 25 March 1944. The first bombing attacks by the Americans did not proceed until May, though RAF bombing had begun in March. Despite ongoing British participation, Churchill muddied the waters with repeated concerns over civilian casualties, delaying the American participation.[59]

The Transportation argument lay at the root of Air Force doctrine and practice. Both USSTAF and Bomber Command viewed themselves as "Strategic Forces" operating under POINTBLANK. The "Bomber Barons" viewed their campaign as complementary to, but separate from, OVERLORD. While Spaatz and Harris no doubt believed that their contribution was significant in its own realm, they also held firmly to not permitting the enemy industry and economy healing time while the heavy bombers supported OVERLORD. Moreover, the specter of heavy bombers directly

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[57] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 123-133; John L. Sullivan, *Overlord's Eagles: Operations of the United States Army Air Forces in the Invasion of Normandy in World War II* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 1997), Chapters Six and Seven; Solly Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warriors* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), passim.

[58] AWC, *RAF Narrative, I*, Chapters 7 and 8; W.W. Rostow, *Pre-Invasion Bombing Strategy: General Eisenhower's Decision of March 25, 1944* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 354-357.

supporting ground operations, as had happened at Salerno and Monte Cassino, was viewed as a misuse of aircraft and antithetical to air doctrine.

While combining the strategic bombing force with the tactical forces, 2 Tactical Air Force (2 TAF) and the US Ninth Air Force, Tedder was straddling belief systems as well as mixing specialized forces. His own belief was that airpower was best used for OVERLORD in "isolating the battlefield," an operational mission, rather than for providing close support, a tactical mission requiring close controls. Tedder's fence-sitting pleased Eisenhower. It gave him on-call use of the bombers, but it also gave Tedder, as executive agent, the role of defacto "Supreme" Allied Air Commander—a position Arnold opposed for any British airman.[60]

Both the RAF and the AAF held that not only the air forces were to be "independent" forces but also "equal" to the ground forces within a campaign. Surprisingly, considering their feelings toward the man, General Montgomery was a champion of this belief and widely quoted as such in AAF circles. His publication of a pamphlet, "Some Notes On High Command in War," for his army was seen as supportive, if not one of the catalysts for the Army Air Forces' own publication of a doctrine stating its independence and equality, Field Manual (FM) 100-20, *Command and Employment of Air Power.*[61]

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[59] Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 400-408.

[60] Churchill wanted Tedder to control all air, a way of inserting British control over air operations. Arnold had wanted Spaatz to be Supreme Allied Air Commander.

[61] US War Department, Field Manual (FM) 100-20: *Command and Employment of Air Power* [hereafter referred to as FM 100-20] (Washington: 21 July 1943); NARA, RG 18, entry 294, Central Decimal File, Memorandum for General Arnold, Subject: New Air Power Doctrine, G-3, Army Air Forces, June 8, 1943, cites Montgomery's effect: Vincent Orange, David R. Mets, Daniel R. Mortensen, and David Spires, *Air Power and Ground Armies: Essays on the Evolution of Anglo-American Air Doctrine 1940-1943* (Maxwell A.F.B., Ala.: Air University Press, 1998), passim.

While Tedder assured the airmen he would prevent their "misuse" by the army, Tedder's protégé Coningham attempted to bureaucratize the air support process as a way to eliminate army control. As he would prove later in the command, as smooth techniques were worked out Coningham would attempt to relieve the air commanders whom he felt had grown too close to the army. [62]

Tedder's own success at controlling the "bomber barons" caused problems with Doolittle, who resented his influence. Nor were the tactical air forces under the close control of AEAF. It was rumored that Brereton, of Ninth Air Force, tended to go his own way from Coningham's "Forward Headquarters" that he was subordinated to. Brereton, who also was waging part of the pre-invasion counterair campaign, earned Bradley's dislike when he failed to make Ninth Air Force assets available for training in lieu of the combat operations his commanders were then managing.[63] It must be stressed that while the operational air commanders—Tedder, Spaatz, Coningham, Brereton, and Doolittle—were not considered sympathetic to army problems, their subordinates who commanded the fighting elements (Broadhurst, Brown, Quesada, and Weyland) were considered genuine heroes by the soldiers and their commanders. Toward the end of his command, Leigh Mallory, too, would be seen by Montgomery as helpful for the Army's problems.

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[62] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10671, File 215C1.093(D3), Air Support, Air Support in Second British Army and First Canadian Army, Brussels, 31.5.45. This document discusses the specifics of the organization and techniques developed for air support within 21 Army Group; *Churchill Mann Papers*, Air Support, ibid.; Ian Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront: Allied Close Air Support in Europe 1943-1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 22-40, 43.

[63] David W. Hogan, *A Command Post at War: First Army Headquarters in Europe, 1943-1945* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2000), 45, 65; Sullivan, *Overlord's Eagles*, 5-18.

The resulting air campaign in preparation for OVERLORD, however, must be considered a success, and Eisenhower's fight to make strategic bombers a theater asset, at least for the invasion, was correct. The value of the strategic bombers targeted against rail centers in lieu of fighter-bombers conducting rail cutting was controversial and the results disputed.[64] Beyond the military results, the arguments of the bomber commanders tended to drive the airmen farther away from the soldiers, and intensified Tedder's demand that the army capture airfields to ease the air situation. Later, when Leigh Mallory drew directly on the strategic bombers for support, personal relations between these men would reach an all-time low.

The approach to battle by the ground commanders was more divisive than for the airmen. In the air, the RAF and AAF shared common ideas, though their tactics and techniques were different. For the operational ground forces, the basic philosophies were more subtly different, and the difference in their own equipment and organizational design distorted the perceptions of one another's effectiveness. Compounded by differing experience, nationalism, and a more personal interchange required for coordinating side-by-side ground operations, it was understandable that participants often perceived a chasm of difference rather than a common operational view. Worse still, unlike the airmen, there was a cancer of perception that had developed from their first battles together in Tunisia. Hard feelings begun in the Mediterranean had followed the commanders to England.

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[64] Rostow, *Pre-Invasion Bombing Strategy*, 72-87; Sullivan, *Overlord's Eagles*, 153-180. Sullivan's analysis is the most detailed nonofficial analysis and critique of the Transportation Plan. It is particularly critical of Tedder and his strategist, Zuckerman, and their claims of success.

The operational differences reflect the Allies' Great War experience. The British Commonwealth had fought from August 1914 to the Armistice; the Americans entered the war in April 1917, but did not enter combat in substantial numbers until the summer of 1918 and not with a full field army until September. First US Army had seen but 110 days of action. Their scars less deep, the Americans examined their short experience differently. Moreover, the interwar posed fewer common experiences. The British Army resumed its Empire duties; America withdrew from the world stage.

Montgomery's view of combat reflected the collective experience of the British Army. At the tactical level he stressed preparation for battle; at the operational level he clearly saw campaigns as sequenced and timed battles, designed first to destroy enemy forces in situ, and then to grind up the inevitable counterattacks and reinforcements that would arrive. This reflected a deep understanding not only of the reality of fighting a numerically larger army, but also experience in fighting the German army, an army possessed of the tactics and talent to fight an attrition battle in depth.[65]

Montgomery's views and talent matured from the desert to Europe, though his campaigns were stereotypical due to the realities of equipment, organization, and the

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[65] General B.L. Montgomery, *Some Brief Notes for Senior Officers on the Conduct of Battle, Some Notes on High Command in War* (Eighth Army, 1943); Field Marshal B.L. Montgomery, *High Command in War* (21 Army Group, 1945); 21 Army Group, *Some Notes on the Use of Air Power in Support of Land Operations and Direct Air Support* (21 Army Group, 1944); 21 Army Group, *Some Notes on the Conduct of War and the Infantry Division in Battle* (21 Army Group, 1944); 21 Army Group, *The Armoured Division in Battle* (21 Army Group, 1944); Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army: A Selection from the Diaries, Correspondence and Other Papers of Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, August 1942 to December 1943* (The Bodley Head: Army Records Society, 1991). Montgomery's pamphlets and correspondence encapsulate both his operational views and the "approach to battle" he used in his commands.

terrain. In the desert, he was forced to fight a war of mobility with an infantry-heavy army, lacking in the skills and tactics of armored warfare and only freshly supplied with the gun-power to defend its immobile troops from armored attack. At Alamein, he failed to control his inept armored corps commander, and spent precious fuel and transport on leap-frogging forward airfields for the Desert Air Force in the pursuit from Alamein. Yet Coningham whose airfields were moved forward, failed to make Rommel's one-road retreat a "highway of death" while simultaneously damning the army for not moving faster. His Sicily and Italy campaigns were mountain battles, a mismatch of organization and capabilities of his heavily wheeled forces too late configured for the desert, and now thrust on different fields. While his symphony approach to battle was refined, he lacked the forces and space to conduct true operations, nor was he given the weight of air effort to support simultaneous interdiction and close support operations, both necessary for keeping a battle fluid.[66]

As events would show, Montgomery's views had adjusted to a wider but different European battlefield, to include the new value of gun-power that had made the armored blitzkrieg impossible except under conditions created by an absence of the enemy or the destruction of his forces in depth, to include his reserves. Montgomery's plans and actions proved he understood the difference between operations and tactics, and how to use tactics to create an operational decision.

Eisenhower, however, had not weighed the battlefield but was simply repelled by the man. In 1943, Ike had written:

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[66] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 3-52.

Montgomery is of a different caliber from some of the outstanding British leaders you have met. He is unquestionably able, but very conceited. For your most secret and confidential information, I will give you my opinion which is that he is so proud of his successes to date that he will never willingly make a move until he is absolutely certain of success—in other words, until he has concentrated enough resources so that anybody could practically guarantee the outcome. This may be unfair to him, but it is the definite impression I received.[67]

Eisenhower would spread this gospel beyond Marshall to his American subordinates and senior staff, giving license to the anti-Monty flavor that permeated SHAEF.

But it was military principle, not personality, that was the real issue. The issue of concentration was key. Concentration, particularly of the self-mobile panzer corps, was critical in the 1940 campaign and was used to gain an operational-level decision. Abandoning this concentration and the idea of sequenced operational objectives to support a strategic objective, the Russian campaign had stalled, irrevocably. Montgomery's own observation on these campaigns, and his view that the British had failed in Africa due to piecemeal commitment of forces, influenced his thinking. He balanced tactical and operational concentration.[68]

Despite his reputation for outnumbering his enemies, that reputation is less than accurate considering that the greatest numbers advantage, even at Alamein, was in overall forces, not necessarily at the point of attack on the German front line. He sought to have superiority of fires, enough forces to hold open a penetration, and reserves to meet a fluid situation. Montgomery understood the German principle of

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[67] EL, *Butcher Papers* and *Eisenhower Papers, II*, 1070-1071. In the printed version, this section has been purged; Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 210-211.

[68] Brooks, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, passim. This volume demonstrates Montgomery's thinking and shows his progression of thought concerning operations; Stephen Ashley Hart, *Montgomery and "Colossal Cracks": The 21st Army Group in Northwest Europe, 1944-1945* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000), Chapters 4 and 5.

the Schwerpunkt, concerning concentrating for main efforts or at a critical point.[69] The issue for all of his operations was not "the break-in battle," it was dealing with enemy reserves as he "broke out."

He also stressed "grouping," called task organizing by the Americans. Montgomery "grouped" at corps level. The American tendency was to task organize at lowest levels using a standard corps mix of two infantry and one armored division, with the key attachments being artillery, additional ammunition for artillery, and apportioned air sorties. The American tendency to use armored divisions as a corps standard in nonarmored terrain, to include holding ground, and the British tendency to shift armor to reserve, or to use it only for specific attacks, was viewed by the Americans as "cautious."

The Eisenhower view of concentration at the operational level had brought stalemate or disaster repeatedly to Allied arms in the Mediterraean. His support of a "far" landing in Casablanca to please Marshall, rather than a closer landing to weight his attack for Tunis, the strategic object; his far-fetched SATIN plan to dash laterally across Tunisia without roads, transport, or logistics that brought on the Kasserine fiasco; his wasteful landing of Eighth Army in the toe of Italy, rather than pushing for a second army-sized landing north of Salerno; and his farcical plan to outlflank the Winter Line in Italy with a single division which hatched the too-small and subsequently disastrous Anzio landings—all of these were the result of staff college maxims concerning boldness and maneuver that played well in crayon on maps, but which the Germans often turned into bloody horror-shows when attempted with real

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[69] Hart, *Montgomery and "Colossal Cracks,"* ibid.

troops. Failure, of course, was accorded in military tradition to subordinates. Ike learned nothing.

Concentration would be a hallmark of Bradley's Normandy operations until August, after which dispersion and maneuver would beg for a new campaign plan and Bradley would return to the Eisenhower model. While American practice stressed time and rapidity over complete planning or concentration, a key distinction from British practice, the result when resistance was met was stalemate, and a pause to concentrate and attack in strength on a narrow front.[70]

The key issue for the ground commanders was the level of command at which battles were fought. Army-level was really the lowest level from which air, artillery groups, armored brigades or separate battalions, engineers, signals, and a host of supporting arms as well as transport and logistic support could be apportioned, and constituted, at the time, the pure operational level of war. Corps, the largest tactical elements, fought battles grouping resources and divisions provided by the Armies. The Army Groups created an operational design for the use of the armies to support the theater campaign plan. The army commanders were the key catalysts in carrying out operations, and the Army Groups the key catalysts for campaigns. Army Groups and Armies had corresponding air headquarters that co-located to ensure a seamless battle, a system that had been developed by Montgomery and Coningham in North

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[70] Michael D. Doubler, *Closing With the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), passim. This is the most detailed study of US tactics and procedures used in Northwest Europe. US generals tended to view "operations" merely as a bigger scale of tactics; the relation of tactics to operations has not been covered by historians.

Africa.[71] Coningham, however, never co-located with Montgomery in Northwest Europe, Montgomery sticking to his dictum that he needed to be close to the front, and Coningham feeling the army commander should move rearward to be with him.

Regardless of country, successful commanders both planned and tasked two levels downward.[72] To do less invited disaster. Montgomery's tendency to see battle this way appalled the Americans, though the frequency of American division commanders being threatened by Army commanders or relieved by Army commanders indicates that the Americans practiced the same procedure, but without written orders. Army Groups and Armies normally wrote letters of instruction or operational memoranda as opposed to publishing formal orders or plans after the campaign plan had been devised.

The American and Commonwealth forces often misunderstood each other across their formation boundaries, a factor that became critical when operations had to be harmonized, or timed as complementary to each other. Montgomery saw the battlefield as interelated sectors; Bradley, as it will be seen, did not. Eisenhower's view, however, would be most important. As Supreme Commander and Ground

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[71] Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General*, 638. This was apparently Montgomery's idea. Coningham had retreated to more rearward airfields during the battles preceding First Alamein. The ground commander, Gen. Sir Claude Auchinleck, remained forward to command and inspire a faltering army. In order to collocate with Coningham, Monty moved the Army Headquarters rearward, severely hampering his own battle control during Second Alamein, during both the battle and the pursuit. As with all World War II actions, command and control was hampered by an overreliance on wire communications and undependable AM and FM radios.

[72] The author is indebted to Oberst-Dr. Heinz Golla, German Army, who as Chief of Exercise Branch, Central Army Group NATO, pointed out that the true translation of "mission tactics" as seen by the German army provided for this and recommended that Richard E. Simpkin's *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on 21st Century Warfare* is the best source in English concerning this topic. A discussion of taskings "two down" is essential to understand this. See, Richard E. Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on 21st Century Warfare* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), 232-234. Bruce Condell and David T. Zabecki, eds. and trans., *On the German Art of War: Truppenfuhrung* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Reinner, 2001), is a translation of the German doctrinal manual used during World War II.

Forces Commander-in-Chief, his views and his command style would shape the upcoming campaign.

In 1943, writing to his friend Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Eisenhower outlined his views on Allied Command:

> The true basis [for Allied unity of command] lies in the earnest cooperation of the senior officers assigned to the Allied theater.

Referring to the position of General Alexander, who was commanding the 15th Army Group and had been designated by the CCS as Deputy Commander-in-Chief:

> He is the Commander-in-Chief only of ground forces committed to an operation . . . he is coordinate with the commanders of Sea and Air. These two commanders are ordinarily with me.
>
> The result is that I am the over-all ground Commander-in-Chief, and I rather feel that it would be waste and duplication to assign another individual to that particular position. Likewise, it would be a waste to keep a man indefinitely as "Deputy Commander-in-Chief" with no other duties than to be just a stand-by in case of disaster to the Commander.

Concerning the actual role of the Supreme Commander:

> He is in a very definite sense the Chairman of a Board, a Chairman that has very definite responsibilities.[73]

Eisenhower was describing the problems that would arise with his "Deputy," Tedder, and also those that would surface over Montgomery's command of an Anglo-American 21 Army Group. Further extolling his ideas in a secret diary memorandum in May 1944, he noted that of his three commanders-in-chief for OVERLORD, two were "ritualistic" and needed more innoculation on unification. Clarifying the

comment for his probing Boswell, Butcher, he noted that these commanders were Ramsay and Leigh Mallory, not Montgomery.[74]

Concerning the exercise of ground command, Eisenhower "always intended" to establish three separate "Commanders-in-Chief," and that

> the land force in each natural channel of march should have its own commander, each reporting directly to my headquarters.[75]

How he would command, he explained after the war:

> Examination will show that there were three great areas in which we had to develop our operations against Germany proper and each of these areas demanded a ground commander-in-chief . . . .
>
> In each of these great zones a battle line commander was necessary and each of them worked with his own tactical Air Force commander. Above them, there was one control only, strategy, and the allocation of the mass of the Air Forces and logistics. That was my function and any thought of inserting a ground commander between those three commanders and myself was not based on logic.[76]

The conduct of operations, therefore, was his subordinates' role; his "strategy" would overlay their operations, but no discussion or perhaps understanding of the interrelationship of the three ground commanders-in-chief was described, even after the fact. OVERLORD's first challenge, the planning and execution of NEPTUNE, the actual landings themselves, would ruthlessly test Eisenhower's "Chairmanship of a Board," and would mark Eisenhower's great character and skill in military diplomacy.

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[73] *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1420-1422.

[74] Ibid., 1880-1882. It is interesting that he does not mention Tedder, whose entire influence was based on "ritualistic" practices and who created the least smooth or cooperative of any of the command relations for the invasion.

[75] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 223.

[76] *Eisenhower Papers, VIII*, 1574-1575.

SHAEF's assumption of control of ground operations was far off, and dependent not on the planning staff's theories or philosophy but on the vagaries of battle itself.

CHAPTER TWO

The Seeds Of Dissension

The COSSAC, Lt. Gen. Frederick Morgan, made a tremendous contribution to OVERLORD. The proposed OUTLINE OVERLORD that he forwarded at the end of July 1943 opened the door for serious consideration of OVERLORD as a "sound operation of war." He confirmed the location of the invasion, gave the operation a tentative structure, initiated key Allied planning and, most important, had obtained the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Prime Minister, and the President.[77] The great strategic debate that had plagued the Allies, namely the time and place of the Cross-Channel attack, was given a solution. Henceforth, the operational requirements of the plan took over.

Churchill, upon seeing OUTLINE OVERLORD, said that it needed to be "25 percent larger." But decisive debate over the size of OVERLORD was squelched at the Combined Chiefs level. The Americans, perhaps fearing a British ploy to cancel the operation, pushed for its immediate acceptance. The British, perhaps fearing the operation would fail, wanted additional discussion of the concept. No changes were made until January 1944, after the appointment of commanders for the operation.[78]

By that month, the Supreme Commander designate, his chief of staff and his newly named ground commander all had similarly pronounced the landing force to be too small. The invasion of Sicily (OPERATION HUSKY) had already proceeded with

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[77] MHI, MS, "History of COSSAC"; Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, which is an expansion of the COSSAC manuscript, describes the planning and problems in detail.

[78] D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, is the most analytical work on the Normandy Invasion plans, and the beginning source for any historical discussion of their development.

a seven-division landing. Surely a direct assault on Fortress Europe would require a greater effort! This obvious debate, however, had not been addressed by the Combined Chiefs in their early discussions of COSSAC's plan, and world-wide allocation of naval forces and landing craft had been made without reference to expanded needs for Europe. The landing craft issue was further complicated by the proposal for a simultaneous landing OPERATION ANVIL in the south of France, as a "diversion," a concept quickly seized upon by Stalin, who saw such a landing as a part of a massive compression envelopment designed to trap the German army in the west. The wish, not the reality, would haunt OVERLORD's development and eventual conduct.[79]

Nor had General Marshall, the presumed future commander, addressed the issue when Morgan travelled to Washington to brief him on developments and to begin establishing a personal relationship with the man whom he believed to be his future boss. Marshall's failure to prompt a strategic review of assigned assets proved a major blunder, eventually delaying the actual landings by a month and revising the proposed "diversion" landing in the Mediterranean.[80]

The lack of naval lift had restricted the COSSAC planners into crafting a three-division assault, a deficiency that General Eisenhower immediately sought to

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[79] Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1951), 123.

[80] Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe* (London: Collins, 1952), 135-138; Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, Chapter VIII, does not discuss this issue regarding his meetings with Marshall. Apparently Morgan was content to accept the 1943 strictures on size, and did not make issue of them with Marshall or anyone else.

eliminate. Montgomery, the 21 Army Group Commander, was tasked by the Supreme Commander to revise the plan, based on a five-division lift for the first wave.[81]

Five divisions offered more than a broader, stronger attack. They permitted an entirely new operational concept. Despite the operation's joint nature, the possibilities offered by the enhanced ground plan controlled the revision for NEPTUNE, the name assigned for the OVERLORD landing. As long as resources permitted, air and naval forces would conform to the ground commander's concept within the limits of their own operational capabilities.

Montgomery was quick to seize the opportunity to shape NEPTUNE. Unhappy with the size and concentration offered in the COSSAC plan, and charged by Eisenhower to strengthen the assault, Montgomery arrived in London intent on widening and deepening the assault. By his arrival he had studied COSSAC's plan, but was not convinced the plan had considered the requirement for ports within the lodgement area as the prerequisite to the operation's success. Not mesmerized by the assault alone, Montgomery's calculations considered the Allied buildup versus the arrival of German reserves, and the subsequent attrition battles that would develop as the correlation of forces swung towards favoring the defenders. Not just more forces,

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[81] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 219; Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic* (Germany: British Army of the Rhine, 1946), 9-14; Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein* [hereafter referred to as Montgomery, *Memoirs*] (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1958), 189-191; Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 108-109; General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1994) (reprint), 3; MHI, *Papers of Dr. Forrest C. Pogue* [hereafter referred to as *Pogue Papers*], Interview with General Eisenhower by Col. S.L.A. Marshall, 3 June 1946.

but more deployment space and the necessary port facilities or sheltered beaches became prime requirements to be solved by the plan of attack.[82]

Montgomery's first objection, therefore, should have been predictable. Why were no landings planned within the key Brittany peninsula, the key to the entire American buildup plan? Major General Charles West, the senior Army planner, ticked off the parameters, including beaches, air support, airfield possibilities—all in the minus column rather than the plus. It was not, however, the end of Montgomery's drumfire questioning of the COSSAC plan and was the beginning of a three-day dissection of the plan, its logic, and the possibilities for expansion.[83]

Montgomery did accept the logic of landing in the Bay de la Seine, but he immediately veered from Morgan's underlying belief in a single key to the operation. Morgan's planners had, in fact, stated that Caen's possession was necessary "to avoid defeat early in the operation." While this would be added to the Air Force's trump, "airfields" as symbolizing near failure during the actual operation, the nuances of both the COSSAC plan and the Eisenhower-approved Montgomery revision, plus the plan's subsequent execution in Normandy, must be examined in tandem to see the foundation of the rift between Eisenhower and SHAEF, and Montgomery, that would prevent the execution of a harmonized campaign plan for the rest of the war in 1944.[84]

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[82] CMH, Historical Section, USFET, "Outline of Notes on History of Planning," I, provides the most detailed summary of planning initiatives and details. A careful assessment of both the COSSAC plan and the Initial Joint Plan is essential to understand the NEPTUNE revision. COSSAC was also referred to as "OVERLORD ONE" after its acceptance and during its refinement in the fall of 1943.

[83] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 491-495, summarizes the planner's postwar interviews; MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Interview with Major General Kenneth R. McClean, 11-13 March 1947; Interview with Major General Ray W. Barker, 16 October 1946; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 62-67.

[84] MHI, MS, War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Committee, "OPERATION OVERLORD" Report and Appreciation, 30 July, [hereafter referred to as COSSAC Plan], 21 (Para. 96).

COSSAC's outline plan froze an operational concept for all to see. Never intended to be "a plan," the outline theorized a concept of operation within a rigidly defined construct of both friendly and enemy orders of battle. While identifying key terrain features and the necessary ports for development, and setting a 90-day schedule for accomplishing the development of the lodgement at the Seine River, COSSAC's outline did not plan actual operations, provide concrete intermediate objectives, specify a line of operations, or propose an operational policy. Rather, it sketched hypothetical phase lines and, in theoretical annexes, proposed possible axes of advance.[85]

Critical to the outline, was the limit placed on the probable enemy strengths, beyond which the outline was not considered a "sound operation of war." This correlation of forces, to include the critical buildup of enemy panzer or otherwise first-class divisions, gave the planners a fair, even if hypothetical, manner in which to estimate if the operations, both at the time of landing and during the three months estimated to create the full lodgement, would be a success, a failure, or a stalemate. As such, these were the most important, yet virtually invisible, portions of the Morgan plan. How the correlation was made, updated, and assessed, argues the essence of Allied intelligence, planning and, moreover, the process of "forecasting" seemingly unavoidable at the SHAEF-CCS level.[86]

While COSSAC and its staff argued against the Montgomery revision, COSSAC never admitted that the enemy reaction to the original outline was predicted

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[85] COSSAC Plan, passim.

[86] F.H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Volume 3, Part 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Chapters 43, 44.

to be larger than originally foreseen in the August 1943 concept as Montgomery was revising the plan. Moreover, this updated threat analysis called in question the basic lines of operation listed as possible in the outline annexes. The enemy threat would continue to grow right up until the actual landings.[87]

COSSAC listed the ports of Cherbourg and the Brittany peninsula as OVERLORD's prime objectives, but saw Caen as the key D-Day objective. Caen became the campaign's red herring. At ten miles from the shore line, it was too far to be considered a logical assault objective on the landing day; COSSAC's planners solved their problem by assigning a coup-de-main capture by the airborne as the logical solution. This would be accomplished by the assigned two-thirds of a division lift, permitted by the CCS directive.[88]

Caen controlled the key roads entering the OVERLORD area from the prime German concentration areas near the Pas de Calais, as well as possessing a geographic location at the mouth of the best avenue of approach from the OVERLORD area toward Paris. From the point of the attacker, Caen would be a magnet for enemy mobile divisions counterattacking the invasion area.[89]

Caen's attraction, however, became an air force mantra, and its possession a repetitive incantation that distorted its value to the ongoing attrition battle in the OVERLORD area. At the time of the COSSAC plan's conception, air superiority was a major preoccupation for the planners. With the daylight bombing of Germany in an

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[87] COSSAC Plan, 8-9 (Para. 36), Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 41-87; NARA, RG 331, Entry 1, Box 59, File 350.09/3, "Buildup of Enemy Forces," SHQ AEF, (44) 17, 12th February 1944.

[88] COSSAC Plan, 27 (Para. 21), 87-90 (Appendix "O"). The plan envisioned three lifts with an elapsed time of 16 hours.

incipient stage, the actual defeat of the Luftwaffe as a prerequisite for landing was not seen as an immediately viable object. The requirement to weaken, and thereafter "hold off," the German daylight fighter force from the landing areas, was as key an enabling task for a successful invasion as protecting the fleet and providing for a logistical buildup in the invasion area. Caen was seen as the key to maintaining air superiority in the invasion area.[90]

Montgomery's final outline provided for a "main effort" in each army zone, the object being to ensure that OVERLORD's prime requirements of a lodgement area could not be eliminated by a single enemy concentration. The original COSSAC planners baulked at what they felt would be a dispersion of effort and lack of focus on Caen. Morgan, had in fact, countered that a strengthened OVERLORD should have an additional division in the landing, all pointed at Caen. Additional airborne lift could go to the Caen coup-de-main.[91]

The NEPTUNE Initial Joint Plan promulgated by the Combined Commanders on 1 February 1944 was, in fact, the only written campaign plan accepted by the 21 Army Group Commander, and the initiating planning document for ground battle plans. Its stipulations cancelled COSSAC's outline plan, a fact resisted by Morgan, misunderstood by Eisenhower, and ignored by Tedder and Monty's enemies at SHAEF. It provided the very broadest of "master plans" upon which subordinate planners could base their estimates and upon which commanders could begin their own tactical planning. Monty intended, and indeed continued throughout the

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[89] COSSAC Plan, 22 (Para. 104), 98 (Appendix V, Para. 1).

[90] COSSAC Plan, 4 (Paras, 8-1, Map "MB"), 8 (Paras. 34-35).

preparation and execution phase, to sharpen, modify, and reassess his orders in the light of newly developed intelligence and later an unfolding enemy reaction. But the initial Initial Joint Plan was the real "Master Plan."

The Initial Joint Plan listed its intention:

> The intention of the Joint Commanders-in-Chief is to assault simultaneously immediately North of the Carentan Estuary, and between the Carentan estuary and the River Orne, with the object of securing as a base for further operations a lodgement area which will include airfield sites and the port of Cherbourg.[92]

These intentions overturned Morgan's assessments, not only concerning Caen as the focal point but also regarding the existence of the marshy terrain that divided the lower Cotentin in the vicinity of the Carentan area. COSSAC believed the enemy could use both to separate a wide landing and provide a defensible position to prevent a cohesive lodgement from forming, and also to block a southern move from the Cotentin Peninsula.[93] One seaborne and two airborne divisions would essentially form

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[91] D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 66-68.

[92] MHI, MS, and First United States Army, *Report of Operations* [hereafter referred to as *FUSA Report of Operations*], 20 October 1943-1 August 1944, Annex 1, Intial Joint Plan, 1 February 1944, Para. 26; NARA RG 331, Decimal 322.01PS to 327.22, Box 47, SHAEF Summary Directives, SHAEF (44) 22, 10 March 1944, Subject: Operation Overlord, to the three "commanders-in-chief," is an interesting paper deserving comment. It cancelled previous COSSAC planning directives and addresses the command function and notes that "Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group, is to command all ground forces engaged in the operation until such time as the Supreme Commander allocates an area of responsibility to the Commanding General, First (US) Army Group." By implication, this will be at the end of Phase I of the operation, the establishment of the beachhead, and the capture of Cherbourg and the airfield sites. Phase II, the capture of Brittany, is absent from the command/administrative appendix.

More intriguing is paragraph 21, that states, "You will adhere to the broad design of the operation as given in the Outline Plan [COSSAC] which has been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff." Considering his directive to Montgomery to "direct and coordinate planning . . . for the seizure of the lodgement area and for initiating operations subsequent to the seizure of the lodgement area," it can be assumed that Eisenhower did not find COSSAC binding on the conduct of the campaign, except for the idea of landing in Normandy and establishing a lodgement including the Brittany ports. This conflicts with Eisenhower's later views on the plan.

[93] COSSAC Plan, 5 (Para. 17), 6 (Para. 26).

their own lodgement, too far to immediately seize Cherbourg, to immediately block the Cotentin, or to quickly link with the main beaches to the east. [94]

Specific tasks allotted to each army, both on D-Day and during the subsequent expansion of the lodgement, were described:

> The tasks of First United States Army in order of priority will be:
>
> (a) to capture Cherbourg as quickly as possible;
>
> (b) to develop Vierville-sur-Mer-Colleville-sur-Mer beachhead Southwards toward St. Lo in conformity with the advance of Second British Army.
>
> The main task of Second British Army will be to develop the bridgehead South of the line Caen . . . St. Lo and Southeast of Caen in order to secure airfield sites and protect the flank of First United States Army while the later is capturing Cherbourg.[95]

COSSAC had circumscribed the lodgement buildup by a series of phase-lines timed to meet the 90 days estimated to capture the sector defined by the Seine River and to include the Brittany ports. This time requirement was never challenged by 21 Army Group, though the placement of the timings of the lines did change. The lines also were influenced by the armies themselves, who were required by the Initial Joint Plan to submit their own time estimates for incorporation into buildup planning.[96] Phase-lines were common in military plans. British offensives in World War I

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[94] L.F. Ellis, *Victory in the West*, Vol. I, *The Battle of Normandy* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1962, 1993), 138-139; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 186. The airborne plan was changed on 27 May to reflect new intelligence concerning the location of German reserves. Under the original concept, the US 82nd Airborne Division would have been tasked to try to block northward movement into the Cotentin by German reserves and establish a blocking line north of the peninsula's neck.

[95] Initial Joint Plan, Paras. 64, 65.

[96] COSSAC Plan, 28, 29 (Paras 38-6);, 30-34 (Part III, Paras. 1-11) , Maps "MC," "MD," "ME," "MF," "MG," "MH," "MJ," "MK"; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, Map 2 Basic Conception Army Plan; *FUSA Report of Operations* Oct 43–Aug 44, Annex 20, 25 February 1944, Forecast of Operations. The initial Joint Plan did not issue phase line maps, which were updated throughout the planning process using COSSAC's D+90 line as the base. Montgomery's published map was the last issued set of phase lines.

frequently used them, usually coded as named color lines (i.e. Blue Line. Red Line etc.), and American operations also made provision for their use, generally as control measures en route to an objective.[97] These lines, then, were familiar controls not predicted to spark controversy. While the phase-lines gave SHAEF a schedule to measure, they did not indicate thrust lines, major objectives, or a key to the Army Group's main efforts. Their formal title in the plan was "Forecast of Operations." (See figure 3.)

These lines became a bone of contention prior to the final briefing and later were used by Montgomery's critics "to prove" that he and his plans had failed. Bradley, who in February had published phase-lines in his own plan, refused to have them displayed during Montgomery's briefing and rehearsal during EXERCISE THUNDERCLAP in April.[98]

Montgomery's Canadian aide had predicted that the phase-lines would become weapons for Monty's enemies; Montgomery apparently saw little concrete in their use, either during the planning phase or in explaining the progress of his campaign. He did, however, focus on one line, the D+17 line as measure of correlating forces with the predicted enemy buildup. After that date, a temporary equilibrium was predicted.[99]

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[97] War Department, Technical Manual 20-205, *Dictionary of United States Army Terms* [hereafter referred to as *Dictionary of US Army Terms*] (Washington, 18 January 1944), 200. This states, "Phase line: conspicuous terrain feature chosen as a place where troops may be halted for control, coordination, and further orders, etc. Each phase line is used as a temporary objective on the way to the final objective." Montgomery used phase lines during El Alamein and most set-piece attacks.

[98] General J. Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 191, 192; Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 560.

[99] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10433, 21 A Gp/00/74/G(Plans), 26 February 1944. The issuing document accompanying the phase line overlays stated: "[T]he attached maps forecast the possible development of operations subsequent to the assault. It is emphasised that this forecast has been prepared as a basis for administrative planning and that its fulfillment in practice will be dependent on enemy reactions which cannot at present be foreseen."

This crossover forecast of the potential buildup of both the friendly and enemy forces was key in determining the success of the drive inland. It would haunt commanders on both sides and determine the tactics of the commanders in the field.

The plans forecast demonstrated the broadest concept of operations begun by Morgan and accepted by Montgomery, i.e., the primacy of the landing region. the need for ports, and that operations might develop to the Seine in about 90 days. Significantly different, was that Brittany, and not the Caen avenue to Paris, was to be the point of main effort for the Allied advance, and there would be no westward wheel toward the Cotentin after the airfield areas beyond Caen and Falaise were taken. Though significant argument over the depth of the British penetration, its timing, and its failure to procure the airfield territory south of Caen would arise, all matters of tactics, the fact was that the overall belief always was that the Brittany ports were the key to establishing the lodgement—the true object of OVERLORD.[100]

Montgomery did modify the most basic assumption of the COSSAC plan, the total dependence upon Caen as the only key to the operation. Morgan's planners had identified the city as the key communications hub through which any substantial German commitment of reserves would come and the portal to the airfield country demanded by the air planners. The plan clearly stated,

> Caen, the bottleneck, remains the key. It is essential for us to seize early if we are able to avoid defeat in the early stages. It is also a valuable pivot for operations to develop the bridgehead.[101]

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[100] COSSAC Plan, 2, "to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which further operations can develop. The lodgement must contain sufficient port facilities to maintain a force of some twenty-six to thirty divisions." These were the Brittany ports.

[101] COSSAC Plan, para. 96.

Montgomery returned to the most basic of the Principles of War. Maintenance of the Objective. NEPTUNE's basic object was a lodgement, made possible by the early development of Cherbourg and the Brittany ports. Monty would therefore strike out for both objectives simultaneously. Cherbourg, as well as Caen, would be an early objectives, "to avoid early defeat" as stated by COSSAC, not as a pivot to go to Brittany.

Two facts of terrain dominated tactics in Normandy and predetermined the type of fighting to be expected on each flank of the Allied front. Caen, Morgan's focus point and the area of most interest to the airmen, offered open rolling terrain, with long-range fields of fire and good going for tanks and vehicles. Caen also offered other opportunities that would cause it to be the Schwerpunkt (critical point or focus of effort) of the enemy's defense.[102]

From the defender's perspective, Caen, its plain, and the high ground to its northeast constituted the major terrain localities needed to trap an invader landing in NEPTUNE's eastern zone. Taken together, they walled in the invaders and permitted major counterattacks, including rolling up the invasion from east to west. From the Caen plain, artillery could fire on concentration areas and on naval craft inshore. The terrain east of the Orne River along the coast, likewise, was a logical staging area to interdict an inland advance by long-range fires, including those from fixed shore batteries.[103]

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[102] COSSAC Plan, 19 (Paras, 86, 87), 20 (Paras, 88-93), 98-103 (Annex V, Paras.1-20, Annexure I). Annex "V" is a detailed topographic and tactical study of the area.

[103] COSSAC Plan, 16 (Para. 55), 21 (Para. 98). Note though the planners identified these problems, the limited-size assault precluded their solution except by airborne forces or commandos not provided in the CCS-approved troop list.

Montgomery solved this problem by widening the beach assault and dropping an airborne division in this vital area. This reversed Morgan's favored route of a direct, narrow-based assault with an airborne division (minus) seizing Caen on D-Day.

Paget's 21 Army Group intelligence supported Morgan's concept. Assessing the two locatable German panzer divisions within striking distance of OVERLORD at Lisieux and Laval, 21 Army Group believed that the Germans could counterattack with infantry against the British beaches (Caen) in about eight hours and the American beaches (Bayeux) in about ten. Panzer attacks could form in about ten and 14 hours in those zones, respectively.

Accepting a near-clairvoyant enemy that could both read and assess the situation that these landings were not diversions, and that a 12-hour window during which no heavy support or armor could land until the next tide would require the Schwerpunkt to be the beaches themselves, Paget's intelligence predicted that the Germans would use both divisions to attack their respective beaches as soon as possible, with the vital town of Caen bypassed.[104] The implication was clear. The airborne would be free to take the town and to consolidate their hold while awaiting the battle of the beaches to be determined by the main force. Caen, as the "key" to victory or defeat, remained a viable D-Day objective for COSSAC.

Montgomery lacked COSSAC's comforting estimates. By 1944, Rommel's new broom had stressed a stronger forward defense, to include the massive application of field fortifications, mines, and the closer siting of counterattack forces. It was,

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[104] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10540, File 215A21.014(D6), 21 Agp/INT/1101/4, 26 August 43, Appreciation of the likely action by two reserve Panzer Divisions on 'D' day of OVERLORD ONE, 1-3.

doctrinally, the reinstitution of the defense tactics and structure of the 1917–1918 defense of the west. While Montgomery stressed both the break-in battle and the need to gain depth immediately, one additional factor lay outside of Montgomery's influence—the effective use of reserves by the defender. Two major operations were to affect these, one active and one passive. The active operation was the controversial Transportation Plan meant to interdict and, as much as possible, isolate the NEPTUNE area. The "passive" operation was FORTITUDE, the famed "Bodyguard of Lies" designed to fix German attention to the Pas De Calais area where it was believed Hitler and his generals most feared a landing. [105]

FORTITUDE gave one contradictory blessing. If successful, it would hold German divisions to the northeast flank of the invasion, the prime avenue of advance toward the final objective—the Ruhr and the critical supply path for the British 21 Army Group, which intended to use the Channel ports as its lines of communication and supply with England. Likewise, it gave the Germans the opportunity to commit, piecemeal, mobile reinforcements towards the critical eastern flank of the invasion, while retaining static divisions in strength to cover the threatened Pas de Calais coast.

These facts should have convinced Eisenhower that Caen was, as it was later termed, more a shield than a pivot for the advance, and that the Allied effort though lacking a designated *main effort*, would rely heavily on Bradley's forces to penetrate the dense bocage area while Dempsey's army crumbled away the German counterattack forces drawn both to the major avenue and siphoned off the Pas De

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[105] NARA 331, Entry 1, Box 59, "Estimate of Enemy Build-up," op. cit. SHAEF (44) 21, 26 February 1944, contains Eisenhower's directive for FORTITUDE; Roger Hesketh, *FORTITUDE: The D-Day Deception Campaign* (London: St. Ermin's Press, 1999), passim.

Calais reserve. Moreover, as intelligence predicted a much higher proportion of enemy mobile divisions within reach of the beachhead, the true substance of the "Master Plan" as delineated in the NEPTUNE Initial Joint Plan should have been apparent.

An attack based on a mutually supporting advance, with the British fighting off the expected armor contingents, was the only possible course of action. The slow buildup of an amphibious landing, and the unfavorable terrain requiring a high proportion of walking infantry, tipped the scales against a rapid, deep advance, even if Montgomery's admonishments to his commanders called for one. He was correct to stress the need, but the wish was always further from the event than believed. In April, Montgomery first mentioned, his intent to have "staked out claims inland" on D-Day. By May, the new intelligence that located 21st Panzer Division "in the woods south of Caen" would have eliminated reasonable hope for such a venture, unless ineptness accompanied temporary surprise on the part of the Germans. No such hope was advertised. The opposite, in fact, was true.[106]

2d Army's published plan phased the operations, with each phase's object to establish a firm base before the next was attempted. It was, in fact, the 1918-pattern limited-objective attack that expected a heavy counterpush, with the artillery and machineguns of the consolidated attack force expected to do the real damage to the

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[106] NAC, RG 24, 24, Volume 10555, File 21502.013 (D7) Ops Brit. Army. Second Army, *An Account of the Operations of Second Army in Europe 1944-1945* [hereafter referred to as *Second Army History*] (Headquarters, Second Army, 1945), 7; 30 Corps, *A Short History of 30 Corps in the European Campaign 1944-1945* (Hanover: 30 Corps, 1945), Map 2, The Second Army Plan; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 80, 81. This reproduces Montgomery's letter to his army commanders regarding gaining depth by use of armored forces; British commanders were informed about the possibility of 21 Panzer's location during Dempsey's preinvasion talk on 23 May.

enemy. Dempsey's army hoped to make three phase-lines before it reached Falaise—the distant object mentioned in Monty's buoyant talk on 7 April.[107] (See figure 3.)

The operations forecast was to meet the line Falaise by D+17. In the west. First Army's advance was predicated on two thrust lines, one to the northwest from UTAH beach toward Cherbourg, and the other in a southwesterly direction toward Coutances to cut the peninsula and then southerly toward the Brittany Peninsula. Though these axes through the bocage offered little rapid movement, they likewise relied upon a mutually reinforcing offensive with the eastern flank cleared by 2 Army. [108]

Monty's EXERCISE THUNDERCLAP, on 7 April, did more than provide for the senior commanders a first airing of their plans. It was, in every aspect, the type of "cloth model" exercise that the British excelled at, designed as "a joint commander service exercise . . . to test certain aspects of the Joint Plan." This wargaming exercise was designed for commanders down to division level along with key staff officers. [109]

The exercise posed 11 separate problems for study, nine by joint Army-Navy-Air syndicates for nine of the problems pertinent to the separate American or British sectors, and two for the entire group that affected all sectors. These contingencies included the failure of separate sector landings, the effect of airborne failures on either flank, to test the flexibility of the plans to permit exploitation of "a very favourable

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[107] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 559-568; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 75-78. THUNDERCLAP was Montgomery's first public airing of his concept of operations, and the one most controversial concerning postwar claims about his plan. What is lost on most analysts is that THUNDERCLAP was a wargame, not simply a briefing, and the last time that major misconceptions, faulty plans, or problems could be identified; and that Montgomery's posed problems underscored the idea that commanders would have to adapt to the conditions of battle. The Master Plan was a rough outline for action, not an architect's blueprint.

[108] FUSA's phase lines are included in Annex 20 to the NEPTUNE plan. See *FUSA Report of Operations*, 20 October 1942 to 1 August 1944: Annex 2 (cont'd).

situation," the effect on the total plan by enemy withdrawal by D+8, plus situations theorizing adverse weather effects, administrative failures, and problems that might develop for the air forces or along the inter-Army boundary. Taken by itself, Monty sought to give his commanders and his co-service commanders a feel for the possibilities that they might meet.[110]

In May, the senior ground commanders assessed their plans. The 21 Army Group appreciation published on 8 May outlined courses of action, and Montgomery wrote the Army commanders stressing the need to ensure all unit plans would take maximum advantage of offensive actions to add depth to the lodgement. The enemy's buildup was carefully assessed for each. Most telling of the appreciation's points were:

- that the Germans would by about D+14 possess sufficient divisions (estimated at 28) to hold approximately a 100-mile line designated as the phase line, and during this period there was the risk of the enemy stabilizing the defense.

- That:

  > Once through the difficult bocage country, greater possibilities for manuever and for the use of armor begin to appear. Our aim during this period should be to contain the maximum forces facing the Eastern flank of the bridgehead, and to thrust towards RENNES.

- That seizure of Quiberon bay offers the greatest potential for surprise and to facilitate logistical support requirements.[111]

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[109] NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 1978, 101-3.5 Exercise THUNDERCLAP, 7-8 April 44.

[110] Ibid.

[111] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10416, 21 A.Gp/00/209/64/Ops, Appreciation on Possible Developments of operations to secure a lodgement area, 7 May 1944; NARA, RG 331, Entry 199, Box 101, 12 AG

Little doubt among the senior commanders would have existed concerning Monty's general intentions. These were, apparently, to maintain a consistent "side by side" offensive, accepting that the eastern flank would fight the bulk of the enemy's mobile reserves. Considering that either Quiberon Bay or the Brittany ports were the major follow-on objectives of the NEPTUNE landings after Cherbourg, virtually all operations would have to be conducted with the intent to support their capture.

Concerning these critical operations, the British, but seemingly less the Americans, understood the potential brake on offensive operations that the bocage area of Normandy Uplands could become. Comprised of centuries-old hedged fields interconnected by nearly covered, sunken, narrow lanes, the bocage had been experienced by those like Alanbrooke in 1940 and were well described to the Americans. Not only intelligence reports defining the physical boundaries of the areas, but also detailed ground-level photographs were also provided.[112]

The 21 Army Group appreciation viewed the bocage as a dual-edged sword to both attacker and defender, noting that

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Military Objectives, 371.3, Vol. I, 21 AG Appreciation, 7 May. The appreciation noted itself as "a tactical study of the terrain correlated with the latest Intelligence estimates of enemy capabilities" (para. 2). It is important to note that the first portion of this estimate, consisting of a detailed terrain estimate and early enemy buildup estimates, arrived in Bradley's headquarters through the American senior planner at Monty's headquarters, who presented it as his own work. See G-3 Memo, 25 April 1944, "draft of tactical terrain study," in the same file, which does not contain full document as in NAC file.

[112] *FUSA Report of Operations,Oct 43–Aug 44*, "First US Army Operations Plan NEPTUNE," 25 February 1944, Annex 1a, Terrain Estimate; MHI, *Papers of Brigadier General Arthur S. Nevins*, contains planning studies, including terrain intelligence; MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Interview with Gen. Walter B. Smith, 11-12 February 1947; NARA RG 338, First Army, Decimal File 381, Box 180, Appendix VI to TIS/D.14/TOP/9.2, Terrain Appreciation, Normandy.

> it will not be easy for forces to advance through rapidly in the face of determined resistance, but it will likewise be most difficult for the enemy to prevent a slow and steady advance by infiltration.[113]

Optimistically, it stated that tanks "can penetrate most of the hedgerows and could no doubt operate in small groups with infantry to good advantage." Considering control problems and possible tactical issues, the appreciation further noted, "The tactics to be employed in fighting through the bocage country should be given considerable study by formations to be employed" Regardless, the appreciation further noted that the speed of unfolding operations would be hampered, problematic, and prone to interruption as both an attack and defense had advantages in the bocage. Noting the lack of American focus on the postassault bocage terrain, Bedell Smith said that it was neither a lack of intelligence or warning, but "we had to get into the country and be bruised by it before we could really take measure of it."[114]

The planners focussed most on the "battle of the bridgehead," the battles up to the D+14/17 line, the key crossover expected in the buildup of enemy forces. After it, stalemated action and attrition battles would be more likely.[115]

The airmen, however, posed their own set of requirements that they felt equaled the ground plan's objectives, and which they demanded ground action to accomplish. Caen and its open ground to the south mesmerized the airmen along with Morgan and the COSSAC planners. From the outset, the development of airfields was the prime consideration for the tactical airmen represented both by AEAF, and most

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[113] NAC, 21 Army Group Appreciation, 2.

[114] 21 Army Group Appreciation, 5; S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1978), 108.

[115] The D+14 and D+17 lines merged over time in various phase line representations published at individual army or army group level.

vocally, by Air Chief Marshal Tedder. COSSAC established an airfield development schedule, though the COSSAC planners' actual locating of airfields south of CAEN was undeveloped. The airfields mentioned in the COSSAC plan proper fall within the D-Day objective line. The bulk of the actual airfield sites desired for the total lodgement area were placed after the change from COSSAC to the NEPTUNE plan and after the initial Montgomery revisions.[116]

The airmen's view of the operation differed significantly. Totally mesmerized by achieving air dominance, the goal of destroying the German forces in Normandy and establishing a secure logdement area and port system held little water in air councils. Moreover, the mechanics of close support to enable the ground forces to achieve force dominance held less attention. While the airmen argued over "control," they also bickered over air strategy concerning the overall interdiction plan and how airpower could best help achieve the conditions necessary to launch NEPTUNE. While this bickering progressed, the planners dealing with ground forces began to identify airfield sites that constituted one of Second Army's major objectives.[117]

The airfields were not precisely located by the COSSAC staff. When they were finally added to the plan in mid-April, the AEAF planners had placed the bulk of them below the D+17 line.[118]

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[116] COSSAC Plan, Map "MB."

[117] EL, Walter B. Smith Collection of World War II Documents, Box 29, AEAF, 15 April 1944; Operation "NEPTUNE" Allied Expeditionary Air Force Air Plan and map, Estimated Availability of Airfield Sites; Initial Joint Plan, Para. 82, states that "the practicability of this [airfield] programme will depend on the anticipated progress of operations."

[118] *Second Army History*, 36-37, cites airfield locations as part of Second Army Operations Plan.

The disconnect went far beyond a lack of coordination between the ground and air planners. The expectation of an early occupation of the airfield ground was not based on current evaluations of the enemy threat. The original German air threat had subsided, making the need to establish air parity less likely. Moreover, the southerly airfield sites would force the ground offensive farther south than Montgomery originally forecast for the D+17 line. Early occupation of the sites could only work if the COSSAC estimate of a gradual German withdrawal panned out. The airfield sites also required a greater advance than the D+17 line; they required an advance of at least 10 miles farther in order to prevent enemy artillery or counterattacks from threatening the maintenance of air operations. All of this would also demand an increase "off-loading" schedule for ships to provide additional units and ammunition, a total impossibility with the shipping and beach maintenance state that was forecast.

The ground threat expected in May, and elaborated upon during the 15 May presentation of plans for the high command, should have given pause to anyone seeing the airfields as a quick-strike proposition. In fact, the stated objective of Caen should have been seen far differently by that time. Montgomery announced to the assembled commanders that intelligence had located a panzer division immediately south of Caen, and that two other panzer divisions could arrive in the NEPTUNE area by dusk on D-Day, and a further two by dark on D+1. By D+2 the total enemy force that could be in action numbered five panzer divisions and a total of seven additional divisions.[119]

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[119] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 581-589, reproduces the notes of the entire Montgomery presentation; *Second Army History*, 7, reproduces Dempsey's presentation to his commanders on 23 May 1944, in which he reemphasized the hard fight ahead. Of note is the following excerpt:

The air plan stipulated two key objectives: air superiority in the NEPTUNE area, and the effective interdiction of the battlefield to slow the enemy rate of buildup. Both were subject to the divergent strategies of the airmen. Air superiority, however, was the gift of the American air forces, not the Royal Air Force, whose Air Marshals sought to dominate Eisenhower's air forces.

This air superiority resulted from Eighth Air Force's execution of its daylight bomber offensive. In following its POINTBLANK directives, the American airmen had savaged the Luftwaffe at a horrendous cost to themselves. As Spaatz pursued the oil offensive following his "Big Week" strikes against aircraft production in February, the Luftwaffe's supply of pilots sank to crisis proportions. Moreover, while Doolittle's strategic Eighth Air Force struck targets deep within Germany, drawing the Luftwaffe to battle, Brereton's Ninth Air Force drove the Luftwaffe from its French airfields within the NEPTUNE area.

Despite the more favorable air situation, the timing for the capture of airfields became an attack point for Tedder to use against Montgomery. Tedder saw the airfields, not the ground battle for the bridgehead, as key. The stress that Tedder placed on this reinforced Morgan's old concept and the stated airfield missions cited in the Initial Joint Plan, but became more divergent from the reality of the ground correlation of forces or what they planned to do. The NEPTUNE revision was driven by ports, and in Montgomery's mind it was clear that the main effort had to be the

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"The recent move of 21 Panzer Division to the woods South of Caen and the character of ROMMEL, the man at the head of affairs, make it reasonable to suppose that the reserves will start to fight immediately in the rear of the beaches, and that it is here that ROMMEL will try to defeat us."; Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 84, shows the difference in current intelligence estimates versus the smaller COSSAC predictions.

early capture of these, with Dempsey's forces in nothing more than a supporting role regardless of statements made at the time or in postbattle obiter dicta.

Montgomery was committed, not only by the reality of geography but by the endless repetition of certain tenets of Morgan's plan, to the capture of Caen "on D-Day." Demonstrating optimism during the 15 May presentation, while stressing the need to drive inland deeply, Montgomery set himself up for a political trap. No experienced commander, particularly with the specter of the Anzio operation still in the air, could fail to say anything other than Montgomery did during the run-up to battle. He had to appear positive; the operation was "on" and no further forces were available. Eisenhower's personal lack of experience in ground battle, however, possibly led him to see the plan's architecture as sancrosanct, and anything less than achieving the paper-stated objectives "as a failure." Monty would complicate matters by claiming the plan was "being followed." By the end of May, however, it is curious that the senior commanders were not wondering if NEPTUNE, even with five divisions in assault and three airborne divisions, was simply too small to gain the quick victories its original planners had sketched on their maps.

By invasion eve, the enemy laydown was particularly daunting. (See figure 4.) Intelligence on 4 June portrayed a ring of divisions around the NEPTUNE landing beaches, with the 91st, 716th Infantry, 352d Infantry, 21st Panzer, and 711th Infantry divisions forming an outline of the lodgement. While the same intelligence review denied exact knowledge of strengths and precise locations of the 352d and the 21st Panzer, their known general locations them put them within counterattack distance of the objective beachhead line, regardless of whether there was confirmation of the

claim that there were "tank tracks north of the Caen-Bayeux lateral." Moreover. "layback" divisions such as the 243d in the west Cotentin and the 346th Division west of the Seine could provide immediate reinforcement.

Most disturbing for thrusts south of Caen should have been the graphic portrayal of the 12th SS Panzer, the Panzer Lehr, and the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier divisions, all arrayed within a day's march of the Caen-Paris avenue astride which the RAF had designated its planned airfield sites. A total of 59 confirmed divisions, including 9 Panzer and 1 Panzergrenadier, were identified in France and the Low Countries. [120]

The latest strategic intelligence assessment, however, had argued for the adequacy of the Allied forces for the contemplated invasion. Presented on 23 May, it revisited the critical force assumptions presented by COSSAC in determining the viability of OVERLORD. Though it noted that the expected German reinforcement exceeded the maximun acceptable under COSSAC's estimate, it contrarily argued that the increased frontage, strength of the assault, and diminished enemy capacity to reinforce due to the Transportation Plan offset the numerical variances. It recommended that the assault go forward. Independently, the Joint Intelligence

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[120] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10549, 21Agp/00/INT/1074, GSI 21 Army Group Weekly NEPTUNE Review NO. 17, 4 JUNE 1944; Ibid., GSI 21 Army Group Weekly NEPTUNE Reviews, No. 1-16, commencing on 14 February, shows a kaleidoscope of German divisional changes. The 21st Panzer was shown moving into the Caen sector on 14 May, the day before the final OVERLORD briefing. At this conference, Monty mentioned its presence, but showed the same confidence he did before Alamein. As at Alamein, the numbers were not dramatically on the side of the attackers; NARA, RG 331, Entry 13, Box 45, SHAEF, Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 11 for the week ending 3 June 1944. (All SHAEF Weekly Summaries are in this file.) It is especially noteworthy that SHAEF's Weekly Intelligence Summary did not locate the 21st Panzer Division near Caen, or give the correct location of the 352d. Had these been noted correctly on 3 June, Eisenhower's expectations might have changed. SHAEF did not post a correct German location for the preassault period until 10 June, in the following estimate; Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, maps following 100; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, Map 11 reproduces this map.

Committee (JIC) on 25 May offered slightly larger figures for reinforcement. but did not recommend cancellation or predict disaster.[121]

SHAEF, meanwhile, began drafting a post-OVERLORD strategy in the absence of any discussions with 21 Army Group. In the final analysis this strategy, and the evaluation of the campaign as it unfolded, demonstrate the difference in values for the individual services and for each command-level headquarters. The genesis of what became "the Broad Front" surfaced silently in SHAEF's hallways in late April and was presented as an acceptable draft by May's end.[122]

The paper was not circulated outside of SHAEF, though publishing it might have met with little comment. Its promulgation, though the raison d'etre of OVERLORD, had no influence over NEPTUNE. The combat commanders were then actually "mounting" NEPTUNE as troops moved into preassault contonements and readied for loading onto ships and landing craft. Airfields were then under "seal," and last-minute reconnaissance and interdiction missions were being flown. The reality of D-Day, not long-term operational and strategic plans, took hold. For the operational commanders, battle was at hand.

By the night of D-Day, Eisenhower signaled the Combined Chiefs, via General Marshall, that "All preliminary reports are satisfactory."[123] The full impact of the landings and its problems would not be sent to the Combined Chiefs for two more days. As the assault commanders assessed their gains, a mixed picture developed.

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[121] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 83-87, Appendices 9, 10.

[122] NARA, RG 331, SHAEF, 381 OVERLORD, Box 77, PostOverlord I, draft, May 30, 1944.

[123] *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1914, 1915.

Few actual D-Day objectives had been accomplished. The D-Day objective line, following the norm for amphibious operations,[124] ran along the "lateral" road emphasized by Montgomery in his THUNDERCLAP briefing. Achieving this line, Allied units would prevent observation, and therefore observed fire onto the D-Day beaches. Caen, due to its potential as a strong point and effective sally port toward the beaches, was included within the line. By nightfall, the forces had seized approximately 50 percent of their D-Day objective line, and worsening weather promised a slow-down in postassault buildup.[125]

On 21 Army Group's right, the First Army had gained both lodgements, but at significant cost in the V Corps (OMAHA beach) sector. VII Corps' UTAH beach landings fortuitously beached south of the planned objective, a weak point unknown to the planners. VII Corps landed with few casualties, but the airborne forces were badly scattered in their night drops, and the bocage separated forces that normally would be expected to cohere into a mutually supporting force. By nightfall, the airborne had perhaps 50 percent of its troops under command, and the seaborne force had yet to link with the airborne perimeter astride the Merderet River. Most important was that the German forces moved into the Cotentin had caused the airborne force to be constricted into a mere bumper for the seaborne landing, and prevented the

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[124] This beachhead line, under current US amphibious doctrine, is known as the "Force Beachhead Line." It is defined as a "phase line that indicates the general trace of the terrain objectives essential to the establishment of a beachhead." This follows the planning principles used by the COSSAC planners. It must be noted that the "D-Day Line" assures the survival of the invasion, and that its actual capture on the day of landing is always reliant on the force ratio, weather, neutralization of prepared enemy defenses, and a quick breakthrough by the landing force. It is established as the immediate goal of the landing force, but is not necessarily possible to always be captured on the day of landing itself.

[125] *FUSA Report of Operations Oct 43–Aug 44, 34-48*; the First Army Report offers no last-light assessment of its D-Day operations. It does, however, provide an extensive discussion of each corps' operations; *Second Army History*, 96, 97. British D-Day operations and the German command reactions are succinctly assessed in the history.

airborne from sealing off the Cherbourg peninsula from the south to prevent reinforcement, as well as rapidly expanding the seaborne advance. Moreover, the marshy land, feared by COSSAC, had German reinforcements splitting the two US beaches as had been predicted.

V Corps' OMAHA beach landings had been disastrous. With little depth to the landing and after suffering heavy infantry casualties upon landing, no armor had struck out to deepen the attack. US priorities, with Monty's approval, were to knit the landing beaches together before the Germans could effectively reinforce the gaps, and then attempt to defeat the landing in detail.[126]

21 Army Group's left flank also met with partial success. The COSSAC plan had selected the Caen beaches for their lack of defenses and, in order to assure the plan's acceptance, had stipulated that a favorable force ratio would be achieved. However, since the strengthening of the plan, beach defenses had been augmented, extensive obstacles and minefields had been laid, and a panzer division had moved within the objective area. The increased defensive strength, delay in landing the subsequent waves, and then the passing of these waves, including armor through cleared lanes, proved to be a slow process in the rough seas. Moreover, local tactical decisions made to reinforce the airborne east of the Orne River had slowed the advance in favor of securing the east flank. Also, stiff fighting at one of the 3d Division's intermediate objectives (the HILLMAN bunker complex) had halted the advance short of Caen. Confusion about the strength of this objective hampered the

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[126] *FUSA Report of Operations* Oct 43–Aug 44, 34-48; IWM, *Montgomery Log*, 7 June. Montgomery met Bradley aboard U.S.S. *Augusta* and ordered closing of the gaps at Carentan and Isigny. Following

attacker's response, and the flanking Canadian division, that might have added forces to the attack, did not move. Available intelligence that might have helped the assault troops also appears not to have been passed downward. [127]

The hoped-for 10-mile advance and capture of Caen had not been achieved. Rather, on the left flank, 21 Army Group found panzers threatening the British airborne, and German armor counterattacks imminent in the gap between the SWORD and JUNO beaches. Depth could not be achieved unless the beach lodgements themselves could be secured from defeat in detail. This entailed combining flankward, not forward attacks. The lodgements had to be widened and connected to prevent being split apart.

Monty had tipped the assault in favor of an early capture of Cherbourg, both by the weight of airborne assault and his insistence that the port's early capture was necessary for the invasion to succeed, but Second Army's planners and those of 1 Corps had looked at their Caen objective realistically. The 10-mile distance from the beach was a significant obstacle, and the planners must have noted that two separate panzer divisions had been located in the vicinity at various times since February.[128] While Dempsey still ordered Caen as a D-Day objective, 1 Corps' assault orders noted that the 3d British Division "should, before dark on D-Day have captured or effectively masked Caen and be disposed in depth with brigade localities" effectively tied in with the 1st Airborne and 3d Canadian Division. Further,

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this, Bradley was to strike west, while methodically clearing the Cotentin to Cherbourg after the neck of the peninsula had been sealed; PRO WO 285/10, *Dempsey Diary*, 6-9 June.

[127] Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, Chapters IX, X.

[128] 21 Army Group GSI, NEPTUNE Reviews No. 1-16, passim.

> Should the enemy forestall us at Caen and the defenses prove to be too strongly organized thus causing us to fail to capture it on D day, further direct assaults which may prove costly, will not be undertaken without reference to 1 Corps.[129]

The multiple failures of D-Day, however, posed more complicated problems than merely achieving the objective line, moving on Cherbourg, or securing Caen. The landing had gone forward during a weather "window," a brief period of acceptable weather to permit the landings. The predicted bad weather that followed would hamper the needed buildup of forces while simultaneously limiting air operations to isolate the beachhead area to German buildup. Moreover, the presence of the three "extra" enemy divisions not foreseen by COSSAC added to the defense. Since the formulation of the plan, the 91st Airlanding Division, the 352d Division, and the 21st Panzer had all blocked key approaches and limited early successes. The assault forces had no recourse but to fight different actions than they had planned, and ones that did not promise quick establishment of the invasion or the rolling back of the defense the COSSAC planners had foreseen. With the enemy responding rapidly, the tactics of the invasion would have to change, though the objectives would maintain their relevance for overall success relative to the defeat of the enemy's forces.

More than any single requirement, the invaders needed space to develop operations. Montgomery had two options. He could attack all out in every sector, hoping to keep the initiative but without using the military norms of a 3:1 superiority in force to gain a military advantage. Or he could launch operational attacks to gain key objectives and then lever his advantages from these. The latter approach both suited the Montgomery style of warfare and used concentration to make up for

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[129] *Second Army History*, 77, 78.

deficiencies in small unit or armor firepower. Artillery, including naval gunfire, could become a hammer in such attacks. Second Army's role became bleeding the enemy through limited objective attacks as well maneuvering the enemy off vital ground, while First Army moved on to gaining what Montgomery termed the strategic objects of OVERLORD, Cherbourg, and eventually, the Brittany ports.[130]

Montgomery tried to hustle both army commanders into rapidly securing their bridgeheads, and then to move deeply toward their respective major objectives before the Germans could mass units along key avenues. More than two weeks before D-Day, Montgomery's G-2 had assessed that the interdiction effort of the Transportation Plan would fail to isolate the battlefield. While the airmen had successfully dropped the major bridges along the Seine, the rail lines entering the NEPTUNE area were not destroyed. At best, the Transportation Plan slowed the enemy buildup with some degree of attrition, mostly among soft-skinned vehicles.[131] Moreover, bad weather had increased German ability to move forces along roads. RAF Bomber Command bombed rail centers during the night of D-Day, and US air forces attacked road movement. But the argument over air control kept the full weight of the bomber force from responding to every potential target, particularly within the lodgement area. Spaatz attempted to minimize the American heavy bomber effort, and Tedder complicated AEAF's attempts to centralize a response by dominating the Air Commanders' Conferences.[132]

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[130] Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 63-70.

[131] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 109.

[132] AWC, MS, Air Historical Branch, *RAF Narrative, Liberation of Northwest Europe, III*, "The Landings in Normandy," Chapters 11, 13, 14.

The ground commanders saw several threats immediately developing from enemy armor and a rapid buildup of forces. Two Panzer divisions were identified as rapidly moving toward the invasion area, and early estimates listed 500 enemy tanks within the Caen area.[133] By 10 June, three Panzer divisions were committed along with seven infantry divisions. As the COSSAC planners had theorized, the buildup of both sides would become central to success or failure.[134]

Though tank numbers were overestimated at this time, the result of the panzers' presence was not. Indeed, it is the panzers—and their complementary arm, antitank weapons—that posed the greatest single threat both to the existence of the Allied lodgement and to any attempts to break loose of the beachhead rapidly being "roped off" by the German defense. German superiority in quality of armor protection, tank guns, optics, and tank-killing systems ranging from the 88mm dual-purpose gun to the hand-held panzerfaust posed an operational problem for the Allies, particularly in the British Second Army sector. Put shortly, they combined to stop or cripple every attempt of armored based forces to advance or to defeat the panzers in open combat. Superior combined-arms tactics also favored the Germans. British reliance on concentration, fires, and carefully orchestrated "limited objective"or "set-piece"

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[133] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 45; NAC, RG 24, volume 10549 File 215A21.023, 21 Army Group Daily Intelligence Summary No. 125, 7 June 1944 (all 21 Army Group Intelligence Summaries are in this file). Intelligence noted that the Germans perceived their greatest threat in the Caen area, hence their immediate commitment of 21 Panzer and 12 SS Panzer to that sector; Summary No. 126, 8 June, notes that I SS Panzer Corps is the overarching headquarters.

[134] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2; Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, 21; NAC, RG 24, vol. 10549, File 215A21.023, 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 12 (9 June 1944); ibid.; 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary, 11 June 1944.

attacks likewise set the operational pattern by the tempo of their execution. preparation, and advance. [135]

From the German perspective, panzer divisions were considered an operational weapon. Capable of rapid self-movement, these combined-arms divisions were counted on to concentrate in a massive counteroffensive to drive the Allies into the sea or, failing a beachhead victory, to strike a killing blow to any Allied advance inland. Allied planners and intelligence keyed their estimates to panzer buildups from the time of COSSAC. Montgomery recognized that his own ability to gain and maintain momentum was contingent on his ability to eliminate the panzer threat.[136]

German commanders hoped to mount a decisive counterblow centering on the Bayeux area, the critical Army boundary for the British and Americans. Several factors swayed battle into this area. The vital Caen area acted as an armor magnet. The panzers attempted to roll up the key left flank via the airborne bridgehead, and also to split the Canadian/British boundaries west of Caen early in the invasion. As additional panzer divisions arrived, they were committed against the British on the more

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[135] Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, Appendix IV; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10560, File D4, Second Army Intelligence Summaries (all 2 Army Intelligence Summaries in this file). These summaries contain daily information on captured equipment with great effort aimed at tanks and antitank systems; Terry Copp, ed., *Montgomery's Scientists: Operational Research in Northwest Europe* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2000), Chapter 10, 11. *Montgomery's Scientists* reproduces key studies concerning armor in Normandy. Shortcomings in British tactics and training are examined in Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 5, 8 June 1944, Appendix E. This summary is typical of tank problems discussed. It is significant that Second Army began circulating intelligence on the strengths and weaknesses of Panther tanks, noting that "Attack by 6 pdr., 75mm, 17 pdr. weapons [is] likely to be ineffective unless strikes are scored in the area between the horizontal line of the gun mantlet and the top of the hull." Essentially, unless this area, less than a man's head high, is hit, the tank is impenetrable from the front.

[136] D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 80, 81; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 82-85; Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 232; Brooks, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 47-54. Brooks reproduces Montgomery's address to the Middle East Staff College, Haifa, 21 September 1942, outlining Montgomery's views on tanks, operational pivots, and the use of armor, plus the destruction of enemy armor. He followed these principles in Normandy. Montgomery, who was a believer in "teaching the generals," lectured on these

favorable ground in the center of the Allied sector. Correctly reading his opponent's intent, Montgomery noted that the Germans consistently tried to pull back their armor in favor of an infantry defense to permit a strong panzer counterblow. Committing his own armor, Montgomery both drew the panzers to battle and prevented the formation of an operational reserve. Essentially, fighting on Second Army's front was an attrition battle regardless of intent or planning, and Montgomery recognized this early in the invasion. Following the logic of Second Army's defensive flank mission, by 10 June Montgomery openly spoke of "attracting panzers" to the British front, an unfortunate word choice for the fixing mission of Second Army. Caen's terrain did the "attracting." Second Army would have to hold the enemy there. [137]

The battle found, however, did not match the battle imagined, especially at Supreme Headquarters and within the Allied Air Force command structure. Neither faction had appreciated Montgomery's actions during the reshaping of the plan or the implications of those changes, and both now reacted with alarm and disdain as events unfolded in the field. Tedder, Coningham, and Morgan hung crepe at every opportunity, declaring that the plan "had failed" and that the invasion had reached a crisis. Coningham appears to have fired the first rounds during the 14 June Air Commanders' conference, and immediately attempted to involve Eisenhower.

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points frequently, but was seen as "didactic" by the Americans. He was a believer in killing Panzers with artillery and was a practitioner of the defensive-offense tactic.

[137] MHI, Foreign Military Studies, B-466, Gen. Geyr von Schweppenburg, Panzer Group West. German attack plans are discussed and mapped in B-466, passim; 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 128, 10 June 1944, and subsequent reports detail the enemy buildup.

Likewise, the two airmen also attempted to split Leigh Mallory from his ground counterpart, Montgomery.[138]

Montgomery sought to develop main efforts on both army fronts. His concern over the early capture of Cherbourg never relented, and he also hoped that Bradley would strike westward and then south from the Cotentin simultaneously. This had not transpired. Caen and the left flank remained to be developed. Rommel, the German tactical commander, had matched Monty's main efforts with two of his own. He sought to pen the Cotentin landings and to delay the inevitable fall of Cherbourg, the destruction of which had already been authorized by Rundstedt. Infantry was sent into the bocage to block Bradley. Simultaneously, panzers were ticketed for the west and center of Dempsey's front while the in-place panzers continued to spar with the airborne in the east.[139]

Failing a direct thrust into Caen during the first two days, Montgomery ordered a double enveloping attack. He simultaneously ordered planning for an airborne division to be dropped to seal the double penetration prior to the juncture of these attacks behind the German front. Leigh Mallory rejected the plan several days before

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[138] AWC, MS, Air Historical Branch, *RAF Narrative, IV*, "The Breakout and Advance to the Lower Rhine," 12 June to 30 September 1944, 4, Chapter 1, passim; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, Chapter 13; Orange, *Coningham*, Chapter 15; Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Arthur Tedder, *With Prejudice: The War Memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder*, G.C.B. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), 552, 553.

[139] *Montgomery Log*, 10 June 1944; Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 171. The defenders had three panzer divisions and seven infantry divisions holding a continuous front on 9 June 1944. Montgomery's evolving battle concept can be traced in his log. It is noteworthy that Montgomery sees each US corps developing its own front, and with the US V Corps' operations to slice across the German front southwestward as a key component of his view for Dempsey's operations.

the widespread revolt of the airmen on the 14th. Daring but unrealistic, the initial operations failed, rendering the airborne plan moot.[140]

The original Dempsey plan, that provided for masking Caen while forces built up, was followed. Moreover, the advance listed as operational policy in the Second Army plan likewise seemed to blueprint the British actions. Focusing on the key terrain listed during the planning stage, Second Army saw the Caen problem as solvable by a turning movement in concert with a move forward by the First US Army. The actual attack was congruent with 30 Corps' phase II objective from the original assault plan, estimated for D+3/D+4.[141]

These attacks went forward on 10 June, with Dempsey taking advantage of a gap developed at Caumont by the US 1st Division. This gap had opened on 10 June, but the front had been eyed the day before by Second Army's commander, who asked Montgomery to prod US V Corps south in that sector. Second Army's right flank had already been battering toward Tilly with scant success. (See figure 5.) Dempsey ordered the 30 Corps commander, Lt. Gen. G. Bucknall, to advance with the 7th Armoured Division. Moving forward the next day as part of OPERATION PERCH, the 7th, after a ten-mile advance passed through Villers Bocage to occupy point 213. The subsequent defeat of the force by a handful of Tiger tanks destroyed the myth of

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[140] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 639-643.

[141] *Second Army History*, 26, 27, 80, 81. See key paragraphs 13-17 in the reproduced Second Army Operation Order No. 1, 21 April 1944, and also the extracts from 30 Corps Operations Order No. 1 that describes Dempsey's intent concerning taking Villers Bocage as Phase II of the preinvasion plan; Ellis, *Victory in the West*, 257, 264, 265. Ellis notes that the buildup of forces ran two days behind and makes the case that the lack of forces at this key juncture severely damaged Dempsey's chances of success.

the Desert Rats. Their subsequent withdrawal, occasioned by the appearance of the 2d Panzer Division, brought on the "crisis"declared by the airmen.[142]

PERCH also began a serious deficiency in Allied coordination and timing. Bradley could not be prodded into using V Corps to support Dempsey's attack, nor later to guard his flank. This made the Montgomery technique of carefully timed, complementary attacks, designed to fix reserves away from the main attack, a total impossibility to conduct effectively. This was the beginning of Bradley's attempts to isolate American operations from British operations, an isolation due to the lack of mutual reinforcing operations, that would cause untold casualties in the future and would become a significant factor in future military failures. What Montgomery had assessed as the pre-Alamein problem of piecemeal attacks by Eighth Army in the desert, would become more and more the operational norm in Normandy due to Bradley's unwillingness to act in an Army Group battle.[143]

From the airmen's perspective, ground operations were failing. Caen had failed to be taken on D-Day, failed to be taken during the first days, and had now eluded the turning movement through Villers Bocage, an action that saw Bucknall's corps relinquishing ground. Nor was the intelligence picture brightening. 21 Army Group's intelligence cited movement of 1 SS and 2 SS Panzer divisions, along with the transfer of II SS Panzer Corps westward with its 9 SS and 10 SS Panzer divisions.

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[142] *Dempsey Diary*, 9 June, 13 June, 14 June; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 376-377, describes Bradley's action in stopping the US V Corps; *Second Army History*, 101-104; Wilmot, *Struggle for Europe*, 307-312. Wilmot's description of PERCH appears to be the first public criticism of British combat troops, particularly the Desert Divisions in the Normandy campaign.

[143] Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, 257. Ellis says that Bradley did not want to push V Corps "too hard," and that his focus was on cutting the Cotentin. He does not explain why V Corps needed to wait for VII Corps to perform this mission.

This meant that up to four more of the large panzer divisions could join the battle. most logically on the Second Army front. (See figure 6.) Intelligence cited that a total of 18 divisions—six panzers, one parachute, and 11 infantry—now held the Normandy front. While this did fall short of the maximum of nine panzer divisions available, intelligence did indicate that further reinforcements were being stripped from Bordeaux, Denmark, and Holland. Despite their best efforts, the airmen failed to isolate the battlefield.[144]

Bradley's beachheads finally linked on the 12th, and the west coast of the Cotentin was reached on the 18th, which signaled Bradley's main effort to capture the port. Still, Cherbourg eluded capture. The original phase-lines theorized capture by the fifteenth day, and Montgomery assessed his buildup in light of launching major operations by the introduction of fresh corps in both armies. Caen still loomed as Dempsey's major objective, along with fixing the bulk of the German panzers. With offloading and ship turn-around delayed, force buildup and the stockpiling of ammunition hampered large unit operations. The arrival of fresh enemy divisions would temporarily give the advantage to the defense if they could be concentrated in a counterattack.[145]

On 18 June, Montgomery issued his first written directive since the February Initial Joint Plan. M.502 outlined his assessments and plans. He noted the exhaustion

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[144] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 493. It should be noted that the arrival of SS Panzer divisions signaled a far larger combat capability than that of Wehrmacht divisions. It should also be noted that the arriving separate panzer "abteilung" units included heavy Tiger battalions, adding far greater capabilities. The division force equivalent was undoubtedly far greater than the maximum buildup predicted, which had not included brigades, army "Tiger" battalions, or dual-purpose flak corps that could act as antitank units.

of the German mobile reserves and their inability to concentrate for a counteroffensive due to lack of infantry, but noted that local counterattacks had delayed Allied plans. Monty banked heavily on "stretching" the enemy to a breaking point. He noted:

> Caen is the key to Cherbourg; its capture will release forces which are now locked up in ensuring that our left flank holds secure.[146]

He ordered the following: Dempsey's Second Army would begin a pincer attack beginning on the 18th with 8 Corps passing lines on the right flank and completing the movement by the 22d. Bradley's First Army was ordered to capture Cherbourg while swinging its own left flank to keep touch with Second Army's offensive. Bringing up XV Corps, Bradley would then move on St. Lo. Calling for drive and energy by all commanders, Montgomery stressed the importance of Cherbourg as a solution for administrative problems beginning to plague the buildup and the expansion of the lodgement. He wanted both Caen and Cherbourg by 24 June. A Channel storm would change this plan.[147]

M.503, issued the next day, modified the plan. Dempsey convinced Montgomery that 8 Corps lacked space on the Orne front, forcing a necessary westward shift of the corps that delayed operations until 22–23 June. As part of his revision, Montgomery stressed that Bradley must not wait for Cherbourg's capture

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[145] *Second Army History*; 106, Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 70, 71, 76,77. Montgomery counted on the arrival of Lt. Gen. R.N. O'Connor's 8 Corps. Badly delayed by the shipping problem, 8 Corps' arrival was put further behind by the Channel storm.

[146] M502,18-6-44, 1-2. It is important to note that Monty saw Dempsey almost daily; he saw Bradley on the 7th, 10th, and 15th and was in constant phone contact with him, not only to gain his appreciation of the situation, but also to issue orders; *Montgomery Log*, 15 June, provides an example. Monty's directives were handwritten by himself, then typed and distributed. They are inconsistently listed as M.----, or M-----, or M-. I have retained their exact typing in notes, but have changed them to M. in the text for consistency.

[147] Ibid., 3,4,

before "extending its operations to the south-west." He noted that when troops became available Bradley should develop operations to the southwest toward Granville, Avranches, and Vire. He ordered study for an airborne landing at St. Malo to speed Third Army's commitment.[148]

The Montgomery–Eisenhower relationship, stiff on its best days, grew strained. Morgan, Tedder, and the SHAEF staff blamed Montgomery for the "stalemate" in Normandy. SHAEF and the airmen saw Caen, not Cherbourg, as key. Eisenhower, seeing a flankward attack from the Caen avenue as having been the original concept, felt that Monty had failed.[149] He wrote to Montgomery, stressing his concern. Washington pressured Eisenhower, and the Supreme Commander, following his practice in Africa and the Mediterranean, sent letters to put the heat on his field commander. Rarely would he visit, and almost never would he confront the man in the field.

What Eisenhower, and Montgomery's critics, failed to understand is that large battles were being fought, with backs to the sea and with a limited amount of artillery or maneuver space. Every British advance sparked a counterattack, sometimes several. Monty's invasion plan had opted for space, but the lack of landing craft and the lack of airlift for airborne forces had limited the amount of force that could be brought to bear immediately. The Allies had lost the buildup race, due not to lack of effort or zeal but to numbers and superior firepower, as in the case of Germany's panzer divisions.

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[148] M504,19-6-44, 1-2.

[149] *Eisenhower Papers, VII*, 1069; COSSAC Plan, 23, Para 114 (c). This was not the plan published in February as the Initial Joint Plan. It is, besides a figment of Eisenhower's imagination, an attempt by Morgan and others at SHAEF to discredit Montgomery by convincing people that the August 1943 feasibility study was the actual campaign plan. It was not.

While tactical opportunities may have been lost, the overall operational success needed to expand the lodgement to the depth and width theorized by Morgan was never possible with the limited forces that had been landed, particularly against a rapid buildup after an assault on beach defenses. Moreover, while Allied air was a scourge for German movement, it neither prevented it, nor did it seal the battlefield. Due to the strictures placed by Coningham on close support, at this period Allied airpower almost never intervened directly in any German panzer counterattack.

The Allies were in an attrition battle, and Montgomery attempted to fight it while controlling his own losses. Merely attacking all out everywhere, as Ike wanted, had failed on numerous occasions in the Great War. 21 Army Group sought to fight by the rules as it understood them. The tactics of small unit battle—not the operational design of large, wide-scale maneuver—obtained.

The airmen who had contributed so much were helpless to do two things: First, they could hamper but not completely interdict ground forces' movement. German forces had been slowed, but the fact remained that five panzer divisions and 17 infantry divisions had been moved into Normandy. Second, the airmen could not remove enemy units from the field. Bombing did not blast forces from their positions. Yet, under the condition that "air forces equaled ground forces," the airmen demanded that their airfields be captured immediately, despite the fact that air superiority in Normandy was never an issue. Tedder continually pressed Eisenhower over the

airfields, who saw the failure to take them as indicative of Montgomery's caution. At the same time, Tedder overruled the use of heavy bombers to support major attacks.[150]

Characteristically, Bradley's shortcomings, in forseeing the bocage problem, in "failing" to take Cherbourg expeditiously or being able to attack simultaneously toward the north and south as desired by the Army Group, were never criticized. The Americans always received sympathy from Eisenhower. The British, and later the French, never drew any empathy from Eisenhower.

For Montgomery, all-out consistent offensives would permanently cripple the British Army and eliminate 21 Army Group's shrinking troop list. Manpower shortages, already dominating offensive capabilities, were never mentioned by Churchill, who had shorted the Army of troops but who had demanded that his general carry Britain's sword to victory.[151] Three weeks into the invasion, Montgomery had to demonstrate that Normandy would not be Anzio, with the Army as a beached whale.[152]

That demonstration would be EPSOM. EPSOM was designed to use the maximum weight of Second Army in an army-controlled battle. The air forces would play a major part. Terrain, however, did much to separate the available forces. 8 Corps

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[150] *Eisenhower Papers, VIII*, 1571. In his comments to the official historian in 1947, Eisenhower did not stress "failure" at Caen, or that the plan had failed; Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 671-712; PRO Air 37/784, *Daily Reflections on the Course of the Battle by Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory* [hereafter referred to *Leigh Mallory Diary*], 14, 16 June 1944; Hamilton excerpts key diary material from Butcher, Montgomery, and Dempsey tracing the evolution of SHAEF-21 Army Group relations; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 553-556; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 4, 5.

[151] 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary, No. 133, 18 June 1944. Britain's manpower problems have always been considered the greatest shortcoming for the Army.

[152] Anzio, which had first been planned during Eisenhower's tenure as SACMED, was a bone of contention between the Americans and the British. As at Normandy, the inability to provide landing craft sufficient for a decisive operational attack left critical force-to-space ratios short. The standard

would carry the major objective, with 30 Corps providing both supporting fires and a flank protection attack. I Corps at Caen would demonstrate. Leigh Mallory promised a maximum air effort, causing more trouble with Tedder, who preferred to believe that he could not commit air support without Tedder's approval.[153]

Dempsey planned to make maximum use of armor in this attack. Originally intended to move to the east and south of Caen, lack of space forced 8 Corps to deploy in the cramped area west of the city. EPSOM aimed at breaking a hole in the panzer line, at gaining a bridgehead over the Odon River, and at gaining position to begin the decisive swing behind the Caen avenue. It replicated the PERCH turning movement writ larger and, if successful, would have broken the German defense into two separate sectors. Weather, however, dogged the execution as well as the buildup. Bradley, whose army was 10 days behind in unloading, begged off throwing in a major attack simultaneously. Again, the British would go it alone, drawing off enemy strength but receiving no reciprocal help.[154]

Storm damage from a huge Channel storm on the 17th and the already slow off-loading had delayed preparations. When forces became available, rainy skies and repetitive weather halts kept airpower as a minor factor. The soldiers proceeded on their own.

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answer from the high command in such cases was "cautiousness" on the part of the field commanders. This was now the constant mantra at SHAEF.

[153] *Second Army History*, 110-115; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 77-85; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 552, 553; Orange, *Coningham*, 198-199; Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 663-670; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 14-16, 18.

[154] *Dempsey Diary*, 17 June-19 June, 21 June. *Montgomery Log*, 15 June, 18 June, 20 June, 23 June; John Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor: General Sir Richard O'Connor*, KT, GCB, DSO, MC (London: Brassey's UK, 1989), 187, 188. Baynes credits O'Connor with proposing the alternative attack zone west of Caen.

Six panzer divisions blocked the British sector; two were immediately in front of 8 Corps and four blocked the 30 Corps approach.[155] (See figure 7.) Besides a break-in battle, Montgomery and Dempsey meant to take on the main weight of German armor, a mission congruent with Montgomery's recently stated policy of holding German armor from the American front.

Launched on 25 June, the attacks proceeded toward Point (Hill) 112, with supplementary attacks being made toward the ridges that cut laterally into 8 Corps' axis of advance. More than 600 guns heralded the offensive, and the Germans responded with panzers to eat at any gains made. (See figure 8.) After six days, Dempsey shut down the battle. He had driven a salient of about six miles into the enemy, but had neither broken through nor defeated the German armor. (See figures 9 and 10.) Ringed with panzer divisions, the troops in the salient fought the enemy to a standstill. Near battle's end, Second Army estimated that it had destroyed 191 enemy tanks. Intelligence also noted, that both the 9 SS and 10 SS Panzer divisions had arrived in sector, a factor no doubt weighing heavily in the decision to halt the attack.[156]

Montgomery proclaimed success, a reflection of his ideas on limited-objective attacks. Intelligence tracked enemy armor reserves and losses carefully, and continually appreciated the capability of the defense to concentrate for a counteroffensive, a task which the British attrition fight was designed to prevent. Earlier, Montgomery had stated in his diary, "as long as Rommel has to use his

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[155] M505, 30th June 1944, lists eight panzer divisions: 21 Pz,2 Pz, 1 SS, 2 SS, 9 SS, 10 SS, 12 SS, and Panzer Lehr. Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, map facing 286, shows six at the beginning of the battle.

[156] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 194-199; *Second Army History*, 110-115.

strategic reserves to plug holes, then we have done well." Enemy armor was used to fill gaps in their infantry line. With the arrival of more German armor, Montgomery opted for the beating of enemy attacks and launching fixing attacks, while Bradley, again begging off an immediate assault on his front, regrouped to attack southwards. SHAEF pronounced the front as failing. Eisenhower quickly moved off to Normandy to see Bradley. Cherbourg had fallen three days before, on 27 June. The subject of Eisenhower's private discussions can only be the subject of conjecture.[157]

Prior to Eisenhower's arrival, Montgomery on 30 June issued M.505, the most far-reaching and important of his orders since the promulgation of the Initial Joint Plan in February. From it, the final design for the Normandy campaign would emerge, not a design based on COSSAC's flawed structure and the assumption of a weak enemy defense, but one based on the actual forces on the field and without the fear of a failed assault or lack of a port to develop.

Montgomery's statement of policy enraged SHAEF and his critics:

> My policy once we had secured a firm lodgement area, has always been to draw the main enemy forces in to the battle of our eastern flank, and to fight them there, so that our affairs on the western flank could proceed the easier.

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[157] *Montgomery Log*, 13 June, 29, 30 June; *Hansen Diary*, 29 June 1944, claims Monty was interested in clearing the coast with Canadian, British, and First Army to take Pas de Calais and wanted to abandon idea of attacking the Brittany ports, which has no basis in fact, though it demonstrated Bradley's misrepresentation of Monty to Ike; Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 432. Second Army Intelligence Summary, No. 26, cited 159 enemy tanks destroyed during EPSOM up to the end of 29 June 1944. The following day's summary added 34 more tanks. Second Army estimated more than 360 tanks destroyed during the June battles. Estimates also noted elements from eight separate panzer divisions were present during EPSOM battles, with 10 SS arriving on the final day.

Citing Bradley's reorganization and restaging of forces to the south as critical, he emphasized that he would follow a policy of retaining the initiative, having no set-backs, and proceeding relentlessly with his plan. This plan he cited as,

> To hold the maximum number of enemy divisions on our eastern flank between CAEN and VILLERS BOCAGE, and to swing our western or right flank of the Army Group southwards and eastwards in a wide sweep so as to threaten the line of withdrawal of such enemy divisions to the south of Paris.[158]

Tasking Second Army to continue its fixing mission while preparing to receive a possible major enemy counteroffensive, Montgomery reiterated the need to seize Caen, "the sooner the better." For First Army, he laid out a specific direction of attack to begin on 3 July:

> The Army [is] to pivot on its left in the CAUMONT area, and to swing southwards and eastwards on to the general line CAUMONT-VIRE-MORTAIN-FOUGERES.

He further specified:

> On reaching the base of the peninsula at AVRANCHES, the right hand [US] Corps (VIII Corps) to be turned westwards into BRITTANY and directed on RENNES and ST MALO.
>
> As regards the remainder of the Army:
>
> Plans will be made to direct a strong right wing in a wide sweep, south of the bocage country, towards successive objectives as follows:
>
> (a) LAVAL-MAYENNE.
> (b) LE MANS-ALENCON

Montgomery's last admonition left no doubt as to his aim:

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[158] M505, 30th June 1944, 1, 2.

> It is highly important that when the above operations begin on 3 July they should be carried out with the greatest drive and energy.[159]

Montgomery's "policy" had in fact percolated over a number of months, not simply since the D-Day failure to take Caen or the failure of PERCH to execute Dempsey's pre-Day plans. It was apparent from the Initial Joint Plan that the strategic objects of Cherbourg and Brittany were in the west, but that the airmen had forced a possession of the Caen area (actually south of Caen) as a key object. Monty's chief operations officer, Brigadier David Belchem, claimed that decisive operations in the west were considered as early as April. Had this been so, it would have been an unformed idea, not reasonable in Montgomery's mind until the campaign began to develop. Monty's discussions and memos prior to the landing indicated his flexibility. While he accepted the mask-and-encircle plan made by Second Army, he was also quick to see the logic of keeping a defense on the left as the panzers bore down on his forces. By mid- to late June his plans section produced an outline plan, LUCKY STRIKE, that reflected his tactical situation and his acceptance that he could not fight the strength of the German army with his British forces, whose strength would diminish over time. Accepting Second Army as the shield, he formalized First Army as the sword with his acceptance of LUCKY STRIKE.[160]

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[159] Ibid., 3.

[160] NARA, RG 338, ML-200, OPLAN LUCKY STRIKE (Clearance of Normandy, circa 1 July 44); NARA, RG 331, Entry 34, Box 34, 381-LUCKY STRIKE; RG 407, Entry 427, Box 1978, First Army, 27 June 1944, 101-3.5 Operation LUCKY STRIKE; Major-General David Belchem, *Victory in Normandy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981), 45-53; MHI, MS, Report of the General Board, European Theater, Study Number 1, "Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe 1944-1945," 29-30. The further development of LUCKY STRIKE, particularly LUCKY STRIKE B, can be seen as evolving from Montgomery's expressed views within the *Montgomery Log*, and also within his directives. His obsession with the western part of the front, as opposed to the east, is also apparent, particularly in view of his constant references to ports, all in the US zone. LUCKY STRIKE completed the "Master Plan" and was the crucial second half of Montgomery's concept of the Normandy

As with a rapid shift of effort and simultaneous attacks in the Cotentin, Bradley did not deliver on time. This was a consistent problem for Montgomery's generalship that was based on timing attacks along the front to pose both threats and actual attacks in different sectors simultaneously, and it further helped to establish a separate American and British battle for Normandy in nationalistic eyes, not the Army Group battle for which Montgomery was responsible.

Characteristically, no talk of "American failure" pervaded SHAEF's kibitzing. Instead, Bradley continued to shovel forces forward piecemeal, chewing up divisions in the bocage by regiments, hoping to gain an adequate start line for a major attack.[161] No thought seems to have been given to following Montgomery's admonition to go for Coutances, a direct concentrated attack via the St. Lo area that would have cut the peninsula laterally, obviated much bad terrain, and bypassed several defending divisions.[162]

Monty attempted to keep up the tempo within the bounds of launching corps-sized attacks, *not* the "company exercises" that Tedder whined about. Montgomery's rationale was that only large forces could prevent the enemy from concentrating on

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Campaign, the first being the dual effort to take Caen and Cherbourg simultaneously, not in tandem as in the COSSAC Plan.

[161] *FUSA Report of Operations* Oct 43–Aug 44, 81-93; Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1961, 1984), passim. It is interesting that the American official account strains to eliminate any cognizance of an "Army Group battle" or any favorable effect gained by Second Army's attrition battles; Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 196 (fn 7), 197 (fn 8). The offical historical account, *The Supreme Command*, by Forrest Pogue (no admirer of Monty) is more fair. Pogue attempts to restrict the importance of LUCKY STRIKE to footnotes, which is not the interpretation given by the US Army Theater Board, that credits LUCKY STRIKE B (variant) as being the breakout plan. Blumenson obscures the fact that the plan existed. Nor have the American historians ever investigated the virtual congruence of LUCKY STRIKE B and Montgomery's directives.

[162] *Montgomery Log*, 23 June 1944; Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Battles of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery* (New York: Random House, 1994), 302. Hamilton quotes a Montgomery letter to Alanbrooke: "I tried very hard to get First US Army to develop its thrust southwards, towards COUTANCE, at the same as it was completing the capture of CHERBOURG."

decisive counterblows, yet terrain and resources, especially artillery, restricted the width and depth of objectives for his own attacks. For Normandy, and indeed for most of the war, the corps was the unit of choice of limited objective attacks. Divisions rarely launched independent operations except within the context of a larger aim.[163]

While Bradley's forces continued their fight, Dempsey moved to complete Caen's capture. Twice failing at an encirclement, Dempsey opted for a frontal assault using maximum air support. Leigh Mallory obliged, and with the Canadians intimately involved, both Generals Crerar and Simonds intended to use their fire coordination skills to the maximum in an advisory capacity. It would become a firepower battle using the air force for mass effect. (See figures 11 and 12.) Apparently, unknown to SHAEF and virtually all of Monty's critics, the Caen operation was to be half a loaf at a time, with the first half being seizing Caen north of the river. The remainder would follow 2d Army's consolidation. The massed bomber strike supported this concept.[164]

Tedder and SHAEF, however, fumed. While Leigh Mallory coordinated, Tedder accused "the Army of being unwilling to fight its battles," and alleged that the air force was being blamed for slow ground gains, Tedder hoped to engineer Montgomery's relief, a situation Alanbrooke would never have accepted. Moreover, Morgan and Smith, ignoring Bradley's lack of movement, blamed the stalemate on

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[163] The Americans considered the corps the largest tactical unit, and for their operations throughout the war, the corps was the real fighting headquarters where detailed planning and control took place. Armies supplied, set tasks, and coordinated air assets; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 559. Tedder's comments had far more to do with his hatred of Montgomery than with his actual or theoretical knowledge of ground combat or actual conditions at the front. His comment also showed incredible ignorance about the actual battle plans for Second Army and how they were carried out.

Montgomery. Eisenhower, who had just spent five days in Normandy without venturing toward the British front, decided to write a letter urging speed. Churchill accosted by Ike, blamed Monty and had a row with Alanbrooke.[165]

Dempsey's Caen attack, called CHARNWOOD, did little to alleviate SHAEF's ire. The airmen were unhappy with the plan, which was designed more to seal the battlefield than to propel the ground attack forward. The plan, in fact, was a victim of Britain's internal Commonwealth politics. With Simonds and Crerar involved, Montgomery gave them leeway, a mistake for which he paid the popularity price. The resulting air plan called the question on the use of bombers. The slow ground advance following the bombardment brought on further ire from Tedder, who continued to hate the Army and Leigh Mallory equally. CHARNWOOD, in fact, was based on Leigh Mallory's ideas from mid-June, and also recognized that the city was cut by both a river and a canal. It was designed to gain the foothold to permit the town to be cleared, not to make a rapid move through it which was, in all probability, impossible.[166]

CHARNWOOD brought Dempsey's forces through the town, but Hitler refused to permit his I SS Panzer Corps to withdraw. The mouth of the avenue was now in friendly hands, but the crucial flanks and depth of the avenue remained to be

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[164] *Second Army History*, 118-121; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 21-24; Ellis, *Victory in the West*, I, 311-316; Colonel C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, III, *The Operations in Northwest Europe 1944-1945* [hereafter referred to as Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, III] (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 152-164.

[165] Danchev and Todman, *Alanbrooke War Diaries*, 566, 567; Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 434-435.

[166] *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 14 June 1944. Second Army Intelligence Summary, No. 34, 7 July 1944, No. 35, 8 July 1944. Dempsey's intelligence noted that the strength of the guns and flak to the west of the town was increasing. Following the attack, they estimated that the value of the city had been eliminated and that its retention would be impossible; for battle description, see *Second Army History*, 118-121.

developed. German tanks and antitank guns still dominated the precious airfield terrain that Morgan and the airmen had declared as the success standard for OVERLORD. [167]

Montgomery's resulting M.510 directive on 10 July, repeated his policy as:

> draw(ing) the main enemy forces in to battle on our eastern flank, and to fight them there, so that our affairs on the western flank may proceed easier.

Noting a reinforcement in front of Bradley, he intended to stage Second Army operations to draw additional force from the western flank. That intention grew into a double attack plan that further split 21 Army Group's commander from support at SHAEF.[168]

While Montgomery's Army commanders planned two "colossal cracks," COBRA (the final product of his M.505 and LUCKY STRIKE B), and GOODWOOD, other operations proceeded. The British front, contrary to SHAEF's jaundiced view, was never quiescent. Because massive operations ("Colossal Cracks") weren't continuous, troublemakers such as Tedder, Morgan, and Butcher, Ike's propagandist, ignored the constant small-unit fighting that comprised limited objective attacks. Battles to absorb or fix reserves or to gain adequate "start lines" for major offensives were continuous in Second Army's sector. These included operations such as PERCH, DAUNTLESS, MARTLET, SPRING, ATLANTIC, and others, that saw

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[167] MHI Foreign Military Studies, MS, C-024, Generalmajor Fritz Kraemer, "1 SS Panzer Corps in the West," passim.

[168] M510, 10-7-44, 1, 2; *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 14 June; *Montgomery Log*, 12 July, notes that the two plans coming to fruition were the long-term result of discussions and orders. This was especially true for COBRA; *Dempsey Diary*, 10-12 July. The GOODWOOD variant, offering a double blow, was proposed by Dempsey on the 12th based on the post-Caen situation, and after discussing variants with his commanders.

units repulsing counterattacks, launching limited objective attacks, or conducting fire raids by artillery.

Constant movement, or the threat of constant movement, was the only true "fixer" to keep enemy divisions in place, and the fact that this worked throughout the campaign indicates that Montgomery's plan, though not gaining significant ground, was working, regardless of when his concept emerged. In one sense, these operations mirrored many of the smaller battles that combined to generate the major "battles" of World War I such as the Somme or Verdun. Unexperienced in such operations, Eisenhower accused the British of not fighting and was content to have his staff openly criticize British operations. Sensitive to American losses, Eisenhower never made such charges against Bradley, never noted the slowness of American divisions to adapt to the bocage, never commented that Bradley faced the lowest quality and fewest numbers of the enemy, and never mentioned that Bradley had been warned about the difficulty of the bocage and that extensive intelligence had been provided by the British. Monty was the designated scapegoat for all failures, at every level.

The differential in considerations betrayed Eisenhower's inability to estimate enemy potential, to assess terrain, or to credit any but Americans in fighting. Indeed, three days after Bradley had confessed at the Army commanders'conference that he had "failed" to deliver the breakthrough Monty had been asking for and ordering since 27 June, Eisenhower wrote Bradley on 8 July,

> I well understand that you are having tough going, both from the ground and from the enemy. However, I am perfectly certain that you

> are on the right track. We must keep up the pressure on the widest possible front on which we can continue to sustain the attack.[169]

The same day, Montgomery received a letter from Eisenhower questioning why "We have not yet attempted a major full-dress attack on the left flank supported by everything we could bring to bear." Continuing, Ike noted that nothing could be done on the right flank to help except possibly an "airborne operation at St. Malo." Montgomery, noting in his own log that Eisenhower's letter "is the first time he has ever expressed any views on the battle," submitted his "reasons in writing," in the traditional military manner, noting in his lengthy response both his actions throughout the campaign and his reasoning. Repeatedly, he stressed the value of Cherbourg and Brittany as key to his actions, and noted his concept:

> The great thing now is to get First and Third Army up to a good strength, and to get them cracking on the southward thrust on the western flank, and then to turn Patton westwards into the Brittany peninsula.[170]

Unfortunately, Montgomery failed to state the glaringly obvious. He hesitated to assault headlong into a qualitatively superior armored force heavily reinforced in depth by antitank weapons and backed by further armor reserves. Eisenhower himself had been appalled at Allied armor's failings, and had already moved to have the American ordnance corps look into it.[171]

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[169] *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1986.

[170] EL, Eisenhower Correspondence, Letter to Montgomery, dated 7 July 1944 (reproduced in EP III,1982-1983); ibid., Montgomery to Eisenhower, M-508; *Montgomery Log*, 8 July 1944.

[171] EL, *Bedell Smith Papers*, SHAEF Cable Log (in), 6 July 44, Eisenhower to Smith.

GOODWOOD exceeded Montgomery's 10 July design and was the Second Army Commander's response to what he felt was Bradley's failure to break out.[172] Dempsey believed that a full corps attack using all three armored divisions following an extensive air preparation would provide the final tip needed to topple the defenses south of Caen. A complementary "fixing" attack to clear the Verrieres ridge area west of Caen would keep the Germans from shifting armor reserves. Two facts boded poorly for the plan. First, the attack would use the narrow Caen-airborne bridgehead as the start line, an area already determined as too small and too congested to amass an additional full corps and its artillery. Secondly, the attack would be made head-on into the strength of the German defense in depth, the very thing that Dempsey and Montgomery had avoided since 8 June. The fact that GOODWOOD would require the same air assets needed for COBRA prevented their simultaneous launching. Dempsey would go first and set the stage for a huge double assault.[173]

As always, air support using anything other than fighter-bombers raised hackles among the airmen. As Leigh Mallory grew increasingly cooperative, Tedder and his henchman, Coningham, resisted "cooperation." Tedder continually attempted to override or derail Leigh Mallory's efforts. GOODWOOD, however, posed a problem to Tedder. Eisenhower was enthusiastic about a great double attack. For once, his idea of everybody attacking everywhere all the time seemed possible. He weighed in promising support. The "blue chip" of Ike's support was to prove another

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[172] PRO, CAB 106/1061, Notes of Conversation between General Dempsey Commander British Second Army and Lt. Col. G.S. Jackson, Capt. B.H. Liddell Hart; *Dempsey Diary*, 10-12 July 1944. The "double blow" was proposed by Dempsey on 12 July based on the post-Caen situation, and after discussing variants with his commanders.

stumbling block in SHAEF-Monty relations, though in reality. Tedder's helpfulness at Ike's prodding disguised Tedder's contempt for the Army and Montgomery.[174]

GOODWOOD was based on several assumptions, both written and unwritten. Primary among them was that the air bombardment would annihilate, or at least neutralize, the German antitank defense in depth built on the Caen avenue as well as cratering the flanks of the breakthrough area to prevent armored counterattacks. A full corps of three armored divisions would pass through the gap created, taking the airfield sites and "writing down" the German armor concentrated in front of the British. Moreover, COBRA, the American breakthrough attack on the St. Lo front, would follow immediately on 19 July, as GOODWOOD culminated.[175]

Dempsey's plan harked back to Monty's pre-EPSOM planning that had been scotched by O'Connor, who again sought to avoid command in this sector, this time believing Crocker should be reinforced for the attack. Dempsey planned for a decisive operation, giving O'Connor three armored divisions, with Falaise as the objective. As the operation neared, Monty hedged his bet, limiting the armored advance to the high ground south of Caen. He also stressed the importance of the 2 Canadian Corps clearing their corridor and thus covering O'Connor's deep flank. Only then would 8

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[173] John J.T. Sweet, *Mounting the Threat: The Battle of Bourguebus Ridge, 18-23 July 1944* (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1977). Sweet's account is based on the former Camberley staff ride and his extensive talks with both O'Connor and other participants in the late 1960s.

[174] Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 561, 562. Tedder wanted to ensure that Monty understood that he was to go all out, regardless of air support, but Eisenhower balked at sending such a message.

[175] *Second Army History*, 123-125; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 97-102; EL, Correspondence File, M-50, 13 July 1944.

Corps be able "to crack about" as the situation demanded. SHAEF, who saw Monty as spending the family fortune—airpower—expected a massive breakthrough.[176]

Airpower played a huge part in the ground commanders' plans, virtually dominating both of the assaults planned. Neither GOODWOOD nor COBRA was seen at the time by SHAEF or the ground commanders as possibly gaining an operational decision beyond rupturing the current defense line, and it is because of this lack of faith that SHAEF's view of Montgomery's generalship hung on thin threads. From the beginning of the NEPTUNE planning period, Tedder and Coningham had been hostile to the Army in general and to Montgomery in particular. Monty, dwelling in his own egocentric bubble, was slow to see this as crippling, though he did shy away from Coningham, tending to deal with Leigh Mallory, whom he saw as his opposite number.[177]

Using airpower to support ground attacks was an unpopular idea with the airmen, but it had a firm root not simply in Montgomery's mind, but also in Eisenhower's mind and those of the SHAEF planners. The plans section, seizing any opportunity to put Eisenhower in direct control, noted in their contingency concerning breaking a "stabilization of the front" that concentrated airpower wielded by SHAEF

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[176] EL, Correspondence File, Letter to Montgomery dated 7 July 1944, reproduced in *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1982-1983; Correspondence File, M-508; *Montgomery Log*, 12-21 July 1944; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10556, File 215B2.016 (D4), Second Army Operation Instruction No. 2, 13 July 1944; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10556, File 215B2.016(D3), 2 CDN Corps, notes from Chief of Staff's meetings, 2d Army, Operation GOODWOOD MEETING; NAC. RG 24. Volume 10791, Corps Comd's Notes on GOODWOOD MEETING; Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor*, 197-205.

[177] *Montgomery Log*, 14, 15 June. Montgomery's ideas concerning Leigh Mallory consistently improved. He believed Leigh Mallory to be a victim of dislike by Coningham and Harris, but not by Tedder, who did dislike Leigh Mallory. Montgomery states clearly that Leigh Mallory is the author of the "bomber in support of ground troops" idea, and that "he is prepared to try anything to win the war."

would be the best course of action.[178] Heavy bombers had proven decisive in saving the Salerno beachhead in September 1943; they were therefore a clear option in Eisenhower's mind.

Tedder, from the first, had opposed this type of tactic, as did Spaatz, Harris, and Doolittle.[179] Their opposition, however, did not take airpower off the discussion table. Montgomery used his trusted Brigadier, Plans, Charles Richardson, to ease air planning with Broadhurst, but Coningham remained intractable. Poor weather and the obviously porous interdiction effort offered little respite to the soldiers despite the targeting data provided by ULTRA decrypts. Unable to seal the battlefield, the airmen were hesitant to try to "blow the enemy off it," the claim, originally made by Tedder for his Desert Squadrons, that was turned down by Montgomery at Alamein.[180]

The ideas percolated with Leigh Mallory, who, betraying the airmen's dim view of "Army Cooperation," began seeing airpower as the Army's best helpmate. Leigh Mallory, however, did share the airmen's view that the Army needed "to get on with it," and was buoyed by the intelligence estimates that repeatedly noted that the German buildup was not meeting their expected capabilities. Moreover, like the other airmen, he did not see German defensive strength, particularly of their superior armor-anti-tank forces, as the critical problem in gaining depth and the desired airfields noted in AEAF's buildup plan. Leigh Mallory, however, did not use his reservations

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[178] NARA, RG 331, Post-Overlord, I, Memo from Plans Staff, 10 June 1944.

[179] Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 453-482.

[180] James Ambrose Brown, *Eagles Strike: The Campaigns of the South African Air Force in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Libya, Tunisia, Tripolitania and Madagascar 1941-1943* (Cape Town: Purnel, 1974), 261. Tedder proposed to hammer the El Alamein positions for 3-4 days to prevent a slugging match "on the best Queensbury Rules lines."

to malign Montgomery or the Army, or to provoke the Army Group Commander's relief. Rather, he sought a solution by using airpower.[181]

Leigh Mallory's conversion was steady, and was recorded nightly by his amanuensis, Hillary St. George Saunders, for the AEAF Diary. Beginning with his ideas on bombing that led to CHARNWOOD, he noted:

> I have never waited to be told by the army what to do in the air, and my view is not bounded, as it seems to be in the case of the army, by the nearest hedge or stream. I said as much, though in different words, to Monty and tried to describe the wider aspects of this battle as I see them, particularly stressing the number of Divisions which he might be have had to fight had they not been prevented from appearing on the scene by air action. He was profoundly uninterested. The fact of the matter is, however, that we have reduced the enemy's opposition considerably and the efficiency of their troops and armour even more so. In spite of this, the army won't get on.[182]

Leigh Mallory was clearly wrong about Montgomery's alleged disinterest and, in fact, had piqued his enthusiasm by offering to break the stalement with bomb power. Nor had Monty ignored that the "Air Forces have set the arena for the Army the army has [not] taken advantage of this situation or made use of it," as claimed by Leigh Mallory.[183] Montgomery's divisions received heavy armored counterattacks despite "air superiority," a gift that was irrelevant on many days due to rain, mist, or cloud cover. Moreover, while the majority of the airmen operated from hardstands in England, the army was loosely tethered by across-the-beach administration hampered

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[181] *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 14 June.

[182] Ibid., 14 June 1944.

[183] Ibid., 15 June 1944. Monty's understanding of airpower, interdiction, and the relative equality of the forces in battle was well known and thoroughly published throughout both the British army and the air force. See Pamphlet, *High Command in War: Post-Overlord*, I, Memo from Plans Staff, 10 June 1944.

greatly by unseasonably bad weather. Montgomery was forced to fight to break the stalemate, regardless of weather.

Despite his views, Leigh Mallory showed a positive face to Montgomery, and they became more empathetic toward each other's problems and plans. The air-ground team that Monty had forged with Coningham for Alam Halfa and Alamein began to reappear, despite AEAF Forward (Coningham) and SHAEF's Deputy Supreme Commander, who was content to separate the air and ground battle.

Leigh Mallory's diversion to CROSSBOW targets, the V-1 launch sites, added further strain to air-ground relations. Doolittle, in particular, resented Eighth Air Force's task of attacking them, a task handed down by AEAF. Tedder, moreover, undercut Leigh Mallory by authorizing a massive air raid on Berlin in "retaliation" for V-1 strikes, while simultaneously cutting off rail attacks to compensate. EPSOM, which received little support due to weather, hardened Leigh Mallory toward the Second Army's support. He noted:

> My mind is very clear on one point which I feel very strongly indeed. It is that we must be prepared to use every bit of air we've got, every single aircraft, in order to unstick the Army if, as I fear, it gets bogged.

Studying a photo depicting a 1,000-yard radius of obliteration around a 100-bomber aiming point, he wrote: "I am convinced that we can do this sort of thing to eight different points along a battle front." Continuing with his reasoning, he outlined ideas that would both transform the campaign and radically change his own position, and that of Montgomery's, for the worse in many people's eyes. Seeing that the Army couldn't get forward on its own, he outlined his operational concept:

We can find 6-8 "blobs", that is to say, battery positions or strong points, along the edge of the assault area. This can be done at first light by heavy bombers. Then an immediate follow up should be an artillery barrage covering the first 1000 yards in the depth of the area to be attacked. When that was lifted I should put in my medium bombers to clobber in front of the advancing Infantry up to a depth of from 1000 to 4000 yards. I am convinced that the moral effect of this triple form of assault would be terrific.

> Finally, I should put the day heavy bombers on to more distant battery targets. If this be done, I truly believe that it would have the effect of getting the Army through. If it is not done, then there is unhappily, a great chance that the Army will continue to stick.[184]

EPSOM, and the failure of O'Connor's 8 Corps to break the front, completed the final conversion of Leigh Mallory. Leigh Mallory knew that Tedder would oppose this action, but the current situation in fact was no more than a replication of the basic assault on D-Day.[185] Its very conception shook the roots of the Trenchard-inspired anti-Army clique that ruled the RAF and was mirrored by Spaatz and Doolittle and the senior elements of the AAF. Its promulgation separated the airmen and soldiers at SHAEF permanently. CHARNWOOD on 8 July had begun this schism. GOODWOOD and COBRA would finish it.

While Monty's M.510 outlined his general objectives, two battles had to be fought: The first was to obtain use of bombers for both plans. Tedder had opposed the use of heavy bombers in the tactical role, a reversal of his own actions while "air commander" for Eisenhower in the Mediterranean. He had orchestrated Spaatz's attack to save Lt. Gen. Mark Clark's imperiled Salerno beachhead. Now, Tedder balked at helping Montgomery, and at supporting ideas originated by Leigh Mallory.

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[184] *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 26 June.

[185] Ibid.

Moreover, Coningham, had opposed such "blitz" attacks. tactics developed by Broadhurst, a Monty-ally and friend of the army.[186]

> The Deputy Supreme Commander reported in his diary that upon confirm[ing] to Montgomery that his opposite number was Coningham, and Dempsey's was Air Vice Marshal Broadhurst [83 Group], Montgomery seemed relieved to have this confirmation.[187]

Tedder's disingenuousness fooled Eisenhower, not only during Normandy but throughout the war. Tedder, had, while professing to Dempsey that plans for the use of bombers would be studied, quickly killed Leigh Mallory's attempt to bolster the failing PERCH offensive. By the time weather, army-air relations, and tactical planning had been harmonized, a needless bloodbath, a second stymied offensive, and the month of June had all expired. This was the measure of Tedder's dedication to army-air cooperation. [188]

Tedder bridged two schools. He had supported the Transportation Plan, essentially requiring half of the sorties flown preceding the invasion. The strategic commanders, Harris and Spaatz, vehemently opposed diverting their bombers to support OVERLORD, and Eisenhower's delayed appointment in gaining operational control reflected the power held by their sponsors, Portal and Arnold, even against the alleged main effort of the entire Allied cause. Spaatz's main strategic commander, Doolittle, was frequently hostile to any diversion. Harris seemed to be beyond all but general control. Spaatz summed the true problem in his diary after arriving in England

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[186] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 465-467; Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*, 134.

[187] Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 552.

in January, 1944. OVERLORD, he feared, would preclude, "Air Operations of sufficient intensity to justify the theory that Germany can be knocked out by Airpower."[189]

This summed the problem. To the American airmen, the AAF was fighing for its independence; to the British airmen, the RAF sought to justify its independence. POINTBLANK, not OVERLORD, was their true quest. Hence, the Army's requests for bomber support had to be ignored except for transportation targets. At no time was the division between the airmen and the soldiers greater.

Owing his allegiance to Portal, Tedder supported this line until Eisenhower exerted his authority. On 25 June, Ike signaled Monty, saying,

> Please do not hesitate to make the maximum demands for any air assistance that can possibly be useful to you. Whenever there is any legitimate opportunity we must blast the enemy with everything we have.[190]

Leigh Mallory had indeed resurrected the bomber idea as promised, and events forced the unwilling airmen to respond. Not only Harris, who had "gardened" Caen, but also Spaatz and Doolittle were soon tasked. COBRA, like GOODWOOD, would be launched following an extensive air preparation. Monty considered the two plans inseparable, as he submitted a single request for air for them both.[191]

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[188] While the Army maintained the hope of a bomber assault to aid EPSOM, this never materialized due to weather.

[189] Eduard Mark, *Aerial Interdiction in Three Wars: Air Power and the Land Battle in Three American Wars* (Washington: Center for Air Force History, 1994), 225.

[190] EL, Correspondence File, MSG S-54520, 25 June 1944, Eisenhower to Montgomery.

[191] EL, Correspondence File, M-50, 13200 July 1944. It is important to note that Monty had requested air from Eisenhower for GOODWOOD in M-49, and from Tedder for both operations in M-53, 140830 July 1944. He noted here, "Plan if successful promises to be decisive and therefore necessary

GOODWOOD relied upon a clean breakthrough, the quick passage of three armoured divisions through the enemy's defensive depth, and the seizure of the high ground approximately six miles from the start line. Originally intending the Bourgebous ridge to be an intermediate objective on the way to Falaise, Montgomery's decided to restrict GOODWOOD's objective to the ridge itself, but left the door open to exploitation if success was immediate. He ordered that, then and during the battle, reconnaissance was to be pushed as far as Falaise, "to study the form." His limiting the advance to an objective, and then an on-order exploitation, may have been due to the withdrawal of German panzers into reserve, signaling that no clean breakthrough would be possible, or to his lack of confidence in good weather for the two operations to take place in tandem. The Armor vs. Armor plus Antitank Guns problem also loomed. Bradley soon added to this worry by asking for more time. COBRA would not be ready until 21 July. [192]

With Tedder in tandem to Eisenhower in hoping for a breakout and seizure of the Caen plain's airfield sites, more rode on the attack than simply a holding action for a one-two operational punch. With Bradley obviously failing in the west, and Tedder and now Marshall and Stimson carping because the British weren't "doing their share," SHAEF wanted a massive victory. So intense was Eisenhower's belief that Monty was intent on solving Ike's own problem with his superiors and staff, that he grew to believe or concoct the idea that a breakout from the east "was always the

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that the air forces bring full weight to bear." These words were the catalyst for the firestorm that followed.

[192] PRO, CAB 106/1061, Conversations between General Dempsey; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10791, G Branch HQ 8 CORPS; CORPS COMD'S NOTES ON "GOODWOOD MEETING." Neither Dempsey nor O'Connor offered military reasons concerning limiting GOODWOOD to a limited-objective

plan."[193] Eisenhower's failure to see GOODWOOD and COBRA as linked operations, and Ike's own ignorance of holding, fixing, and secondary efforts versus main efforts, would plague relations not only in Normandy but for the rest of the war.

GOODWOOD's tactics were crafted by Dempsey, not Montgomery as his critics at SHAEF reported. The reality of the small bridgehead posed restraints on both mounting and maneuvering, and as in the Alamein minefields, restricted limits hampered armor deployment. Worst of the problems would be a lack of accurate intelligence of the location and depth of the German defenses. The air preparation was intended not simply to neutralize lanes into the combat zone, but also to replace artillery that could not reach into the depths of the defense, and to saturate it in a near-simultaneous bombardment to prevent its resiting. (See figure 13.)[194]

Leigh Mallory awaited what he called "the air-blast battle," noting in his diary that the "Leigh Mallory plan" for bombing and breakthrough should work, but presciently said,

> There are people in a high quarter who won't be sorry if it does not succeed. But it is equally true to say that there are others who wish it every success.

Tedder remained silent throughout their conferences, and Coningham, stunningly, had become cooperative. Referring to Tedder, he noted, "I think he had been told by Ike to leave things to me."[195]

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attack. Dempsey believed it was to clear up "misconceptions" at the execution level. He noted that Monty oversold GOODWOOD to secure air support.

[193] COSSAC Plan, 29, Paras. 40-45.

[194] Goodwood Meeting, 8 Corps Comd Notes; CAB 106, Conversation with General Dempsey; Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor*, ibid.

[195] *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 14th, 15th, 17th July.

In France to observe the bombing, Leigh Mallory recorded:

> The plan was a good one and the air could play its full part because we knew where the defences were and the bombs fell on them. The whole thing went quickly until 11 a.m.[196]

Leigh Mallory was partially correct. The attack rolled forward, but the bombardment achieved limited results. The towns to the flanks were not neutralized and required the lead armored division's motorized infantry to deploy. The surviving enemy in the bombed areas were dazed, but recovered after some time passed. Tanks survived in rubbled towns, as did some antitank guns within the bombardment area, and these were manned after the shock of the bombing wore off. 11th Armoured Division drove 10,000 yards, nearly to the limit of advance, and suddenly found itself fighing both tanks and 88-mm guns. Congestion and caution delayed 7th Armoured's deployment, and Guards Armoured found itself mired in fights to the flanks. The reconnaissance screen of armored cars meant for Falaise found no passage off the battlefield. German reserves from the unlocated panzer divisions responded quickly. By day's end, 8 Corps was in a ring of hot steel.[197] (See figure 14.)

By afternoon, two contrary opinions had emerged. Montgomery, unfortunately, told the press that the line had been broken, and subsequent reports soon proved him wrong. Leigh Mallory, who had watched the bombing from a captured Storch aircraft, soon visited Dempsey asking for reports of a breakthrough. Dempsey felt the absence

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[196] Ibid., 18th, 19th July; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 36-59. This provides the most in-depth record of air operations in support of GOODWOOD.

[197] *Second Army History*, 123-128; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 100-105; *Montgomery's Scientists*, OR Report 6 Bombing in Operation Goodwood, 79-85; RG 24 including Corps Comd Notes "Goodwood Meeting." Of interest also is the statement made in Second Army Intelligence Summary, No. 46, 20 July 1944: "The so-called tank country doesn't really exist—there are too many inhabited places and the very successful armoured break through has now had to give place to infantry with tank support."

of complete reports was normal after only a few hours, but Leigh Mallory "believe[d] the real reason for the lack of reports was because by then the Army was not making much progress."

By the next day, Leigh Mallory reported:

> [I]t does not seem to me that the breakthrough which we produced has been exploited and pressed to a conclusion. There we were, having helped the Army over all the preliminary gun positions of the enemy, but it was a disappointment to the Air Force that they didn't go further. After all, they must expect to be shot at a bit.[198]

8 Corps continued battering forward, but failed to clear the ridge. In the pouring rain on the 21st, Montgomery ordered Dempsey to shut down GOODWOOD, as the Canadians had completed the capture of Caen and its approaches. Bradley's assault, meanwhile, went on hold due to the weather. The operational rhythm of the one-two punch had been lost. The synergy of being able to consume the enemy reserves between hole-filling on two fronts had been stopped. Four hundred ninety-three British tanks were destroyed or temporarily put out of action, and 5500 casualties were suffered by the 1, 8, 12, and 2 Canadian Corps. Montgomery moved to coordinate another fixing attack using the 2 Canadian Corps while he ceased major operations to conserve men.[199]

The airmen demanded Monty's head, and a manipulated and enraged Eisenhower, they hoped, would be the headsman. Tedder pressed Eisenhower. His false claim, that "his government would support any necessary action taken," was intended only for one thing—to encourage Ike to demand Monty's relief. Tedder

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[198] *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 18th, 19th July 1944.

approached Portal, trying to engineer support for Montgomery's relief. Failing this, he went after Leigh Mallory, "to place on a more solid footing the arrangements for control of our air forces." Upset, but sensitive to the fact that such an action may cost the coalition far more than hurt feelings, Eisenhower retaliated as only a staff officer would—with paper—after failing to say anything about his concerns to Montgomery at a conference the day before. The correspondence file on GOODWOOD shows where Ike's bitterness was born. Montgomery had begun his explanation of his plan on the 13th saying, "Am going to launch two very big attacks next week," and specified that his assault would use three armored divisions while Bradley's attack would use six divisions. Eisenhower, however, responded,

> [W]hen this thing is started you can count on Bradley to keep his troops fighting like the very devil, twenty-four hours a day, to provide the opportunity your armored corps will need, and to make the victory complete.[200]

Having reversed the roles of the armies in his mind, Eisenhower wrote on the 21st expressing his disappointment that Dempsey's army had stopped after breaking through the front lines, and noted that Monty's reliance on Bradley's attack (inferring this was new because of Second Army's failure) was problematic. He noted that in Bradley's sector,

> the country is bad, and the enemy strong at the point of main assault, and more than ever I think it is important that we are aggressive throughout the front.

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[199] *Second Army History*, 122-128; Ellis, Victory in the West, I, 327-353; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 381-390.

[200] EL, Correspondence File, Montgomery, Msg. M-50, 132000 July 44; letter Eisenhower to Montgomery, 14 July 1944; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 391-399; Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 617-626; Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 562-570.

Adding insult to injury, he stated,

> I realize the seriousness of the reinforcement problem for Dempsey . . . But while we have equality in size we must go forward shoulder to shoulder, with honors and sacrifices equally shared.[201]

Having already issued M.512, which ordered continued operations to widen the breach and to direct First Army south and east, Montgomery tartly replied,

> 'There is not repeat not and never has been any intention of stopping offensive operations on the eastern flank.

He noted in his letter, the insertion of Canadian First Army into battle to provide concentration for Dempsey toward Falaise and noted a corps-sized attack planned for 25 July. Eisenhower failed to reply, but stepped up his attacks via Churchill. To avoid further misunderstandings of simultaneous operations, *Montgomery sent M.514 on the* planned day for Bradley's assault, 24 July, noting Bradley's mission to break in, pass more divisions through the gap, and drive for Coutance and Granville. Dempsey would launch a series of corps attacks east and west of the Orne as preliminaries to a larger armored thrust towards Falaise.[202]

Bradley's COBRA began inauspiciously with a bombing on the start line by his supporting air on the 24th after the operation was postponed. The next day's bombing repeated a friendly-fire incident that killed the US Army Ground Forces Commander, Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, who was observing the operation. That same bombing did, however, stun the entire Panzer Lehr Division and left a hole in the German main line of resistance. COBRA ground forward. VII Corps commander Maj.

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[201] EL, Correspondence File, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 21 July 1944.

[202] EL, Correspondence file, M-514, 24-7-44.

Gen. J. Lawton Collins had modified Bradley's plan, which had been based on Monty's M-505. Passing the armor rapidly while the infantry was still achieving its breakin objectives, VII Corps shook free of the defense and was soon into the Germans' rear area. Bradley's front was neither manned as heavily by the Germans nor in any sufficient depth to reform. With Dempsey launching probes along his front, the German defensive depth remained in the east until it was too late to prevent a rupture. Montgomery who had refused to attack enemy strength throughout its entire depth had been proven operationally correct. The battle in depth, had, as in the Great War, always been dependent upon the enemy's operational reserve and the ability to use it. The battles around Caen had both fixed that reserve and ground it up. SHAEF, however, painted a different story.[203] (See figure 15.)

Monty's double assault on the 25th left Eisenhower with gripes but no substantial case. Temporarily buoyed by Churchill's mercurial disdain for Montgomery, Eisenhower found that Churchill soon swayed to Montgomery's support after visiting 21 Army Group Tactical Headquarters. Eisenhower's hopes for relieving or somehow overpowering Monty's seeming independence were shattered. Perhaps,

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[203] *FUSA Report of Operations* Oct 43–Aug 44, 96-102, Situation Map No. 6 (St. Lo South); NARA, RG 407, 103-5, First Army Plans, "Conference Held in war tent-12 July 1944-Gen. Bradley and Staff; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 232-245; Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, Chapters XI, XII, XIII; NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 1978, Amendment No. 2-Outline Plan Cobra, 18 July 1944; *Hansen Diary*, 19 July, reveals the pride and prejudice of COBRA. The Anglophobic Hansen recounts proudly of Bradley's masterful coordination of air support that, "Brad kept it an all American show," keeping RAF aircraft from supporting, wrongly alleging that they could carry only heavy bombs. In *Hansen Diary*, 25 July, he records that Eisenhower announced for all the scribbling aides to hear, after McNair's death, "I look upon heavies as an instrument for strategic attack on rear installations. I don't believe they can be used in support of ground troops. That's a job for artillery. I gave them a green light on this show but this is the last one." This is an incredible and untrue turn-around from his position early in July prior to GOODWOOD. Nor did he forbid use of heavies again two weeks later. The *Hansen Diary* section for 1-31 July 44 has entire Bradley Memorandum exonerating himself for his coordination of the "short bombing." Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 104-110.

characteristically, Eisenhower falsely reported to Monty himself on his meeting with Churchill during which he had hoped to remove Montgomery,

> I reported to Churchill your general plan plan for continuing attack in the Eastern Sector and he was delighted to know you will have attacks on both flanks in that sector supporting the main effort down the middle.

Montgomery, of course, had indicated no main effort in the middle. The next day Monty clarified the situation simply by issuing M.515, stating:

> On the western flank the First US Army has delivered the main blow of the whole Allied plan, the main effort is making excellent progress . . . The main blow of the eastern flank will be delivered in great strength by the right wing of the Second British Army. . . . What it all amounts to is that I am planning to fight the enemy really hard on both flanks simultaneously. . . . The really big victory is wanted on the western flank, and everything will be subordinated to making it so. [204]

Conceptually, Eisenhower seemed to misunderstand that the American and Commonwealth forces were joined by a common campaign plan under a single Army Group headquarters. To Ike, Monty commanded the British, and Bradley commanded the American forces. Eisenhower never mentioned Dempsey as the commander of the eastern flank's Second Army, nor did he ever acknowlege the British chain of command. This was a habit of mind Bradley continued to foster in their personal discussions.[205]

Bradley's huge First Army, set to subdivide into the First and Third US Armies on 1 August, looked forward to declaring their independence from Montgomery. They were, however, disappointed. Informed that 12th Army Group

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[204] EL, Correspondence File, letter to Montgomery 26 July 1944; Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 625, 626;

would remain under Montgomery's operational control until SCAEF could assume full control, Bradley's staff, and particularly the volatile Third Army commander, intended to control their own fates. Moreover, Eisenhower, whose small forward headquarters was in France, intended to insert himself into the ground battle without assuming command.

GOODWOOD had smashed Montgomery's reputation for all time with SHAEF, the airmen and, in a psychological sense, with the Supreme Commander. Rather than crediting Montgomery, the ground commander, with the unfolding victory in Normandy, a different interpretation evolved through press leaks, Eisenhower's own correspondence to Marshall, SHAEF's official dispatch, and the prevailing attitude of the American press corps. None of these explained the tactics or the difficulties of the campaign. The poetry of "attack all the time all along the front" would cloud the issue. The airmen would continue to say the army's lack of guts, not the aid of airpower for the battlefield, was an issue in explaining why the lodgement developed so slowly.[206]

While this pustule broke and infected the coalition command atmosphere, Montgomery achieved what he had wanted from the time of his May discussions with Bradley and Dempsey. He was probing deeply with armored formations before the enemy could reform a cohesive defense. Moreover, he was executing what he laid out

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[205] This campaign would reach outrageous proportions by mid-August, when Marshall again raised the specter of Eisenhower assuming ground command due to bad publicity at home.

[206] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2074-2077; Eisenhower, *Report by the Supreme Commander*, 39, 61. Eisenhower began to go to great lengths to disassociate Montgomery's name from the Normandy victory. In SHAEF's official dispatch, he denigrated Montgomery's role, calling him a "coordinator of activities." When Marshall began demanding Eisenhower's assumption of operational command, he signaled: "[I]t would be a great pity if Bradley failed to get full credit due him for his brilliant

to Eisenhower in M.512 on the 21st at the height of Eisenhower's rage, a swing of the western flank to the south and east, with the object of capturing *the Brittany ports and* taking the Brittany peninsula, "so that we can develop the full resources of the Allies in western Europe."[207]

On the 25th, as COBRA appeared to be floundering, the German operational reserve, the majority of the German panzer divisions, remained in front of the Second Army and the newly committed First Canadian Army. Not wishing to insert a new headquarters for the eastern attack, Montgomery gave Lt. Gen. Crerar the 1 Corps on the east flank, while keeping Simonds' 2 Canadian Corps temporarily within Dempsey's sector. Simonds' men would jump off on the 25th. Following their role in OPERATION SPRING, the battle for Bourgebous Ridge, Simonds' new mission placed his corps opposite the strongest concentration of enemy troops on the entire Allied front. Of the seven panzer divisions facing Dempsey, five-plus fronted on the Canadian sector.[208]

While Simonds briefed deep objectives with an on-order exploitation south of the heavily fortified Verrieres Ridge, he personally believed his mission more of a holding attack for Bradley's offensive, and that the force-ratio on his front precluded a breakthrough.[209] SPRING proved to be one of the bloodiest operations fought by

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performance merely because general instructions and policies he has pursued have been channeled through Montgomery."

[207] EL, Correspondence File, M.512, 21-7-44; M.515, 27-7-44.

[208] NAC, RG 24, Volume 11001, *War Diary*, *Lt. Gen. H.D.G. Crerar*, 1st Canadian Army, 1-31 July 1944, Memorandum of Conference with C-in-C 21 Army Group, 20 July 1944. Crerar assumed command of the 3rd, 49th, 51st, and 6th Airborne Divisions, an all-British force; Stacey, *Victory Campaign*, III, 183-185.

[209] Ibid., 186.

Canadian troops, and characteristically received no comment or credit from SHAEF or the Americans.

Coutances—the objective Montgomery had been stressing since June and was the object of the V Corps drive that Bradley refused to launch at that time—was reached on 27 July. SHAEF intelligence assessed that the 18 infantry and 9 panzer divisions within the battle area actually equated to a force of 16—10 infantry and six panzer divisions—due to losses. The SHAEF G-2 went on to say that

> the enemy seems finally to have realized that, if the line in NORMANDY collapses, the game is pretty nearly up, and is willing, therefore, to go on feeding divisions from other sectors to the flames as often as required and as rapidly as practicable.[210]

SHAEF's optimism, however, had to have been restrained. Though FORTITUDE miraculously still held forces in place both on the north coast and in the south of France, the enemy order of battle in the west stood at 63 divisions—46 outside the OVERLORD lodgement area. Moreover, only one panzer division, the 2d, was known to be shifting towards Bradley's penetration. With six divisions having been milked from Brittany's original force of eight to bolster the Normandy front in the previous days, the long-term OVERLORD object of the Brittany ports seemed an easier target providing First Army could maintain its southern movement and pass Third Army through to take the ports.[211]

Montgomery's intentions followed plan LUCKY STRIKE B, a variant of the plan produced in late June by 21 Army Group. That plan, which had been circulated to both SHAEF and First US Army, now fit the planning assumptions listed as necessary

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[210] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 19, week ending 29 July, 2.

for a major operational change from the contemplated side-by-side offensive foreseen in the original Initial Joint Plan in February. These conditions, a considerable weakening of the Brittany defense forces, a general weakness of force in the sector proscribed by the Loire and the line LAVAL-LE MANS-CHARTRES, and the absence of a strong mobile enemy south of the Loire—essentially a wide open flank to the south existed—meant that Third Army's role would shift to making a wide sweep to block the Paris-Orleans gap while seizing Brittany with minimal forces and not a full army.[212] (See figures 16, 17, 18, and 19.)

LUCKY STRIKE had been percolating in the background, and the belief that Brittany would not require a full-army assault had been prevalent since early July as German divisions began to transfer to the Normandy front. Though Montgomery's planners had produced the plan in the expectation that Bradley would shake loose of the bocage the first week of July, SHAEF, and others, sought to disassociate the plan from 21 Army Group and Montgomery despite the fact that Montgomery's directives outlined the conditions and axes from the original plans.[213]

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[211] Ibid., 3, order of battle map.

[212] *Report of the General Board Study No. 1*, 30. The General Board report states: "As early as June, the planning staffs of the Allied High Command had visualized that events might develop as they were now unfolding on the ground. This particular sequence of events was forecast in Plan LUCKY STRIKE, a series of studies based on the possible acceleration of OVERLORD timings. Plan B of Lucky Strike was premised on . . . [lists complete plan]." First Army Plans File, Operation LUCKY STRIKE, 2. See conditions for Plan B and accompanying map sketches.

[213] NARA, RG 319, 2-3.7 CB Supreme Command, Box 215. Letter to Chief of Military History from Major General Franklin A. Kibler, 14 June 1951. Kibler, who served as Bradley's G-3, denied that Bradley took orders from Montgomery, but merely informed him of his actions. He also denied the existence of LUCKY STRIKE. Kibler, however, sat on the General Board and helped author the report citing the plan as the basic Allied strategy. It is important to note that Bradley and Montgomery talked personally, that no staff officers were present, and while mutual accord was the aim, it is impossible to diverge from the written record based on what was claimed after the fact. It is also important to note that Montgomery often told his Chief of Staff or Plans officer to develop certain courses of action; Bradley likewise considered himself his own G-3.

With new command relations frothing, and the German front broken through, July ended with the Americans executing LUCKY STRIKE B. Patton's forces, committed from behind Hodges' First Army, drove south and were gaining ground rapidly into the enemy's operational depth, where no enemy existed to stop him. Across the front, however, the two army groups were still at grips with a strong enemy. Bradley expressed considerable concern over a possible large-scale German counterattack.

CHAPTER THREE

Decision Points

August opened new dimensions to the Allied campaign, the true development of military operations and significant questions relating not simply to seizing opportunities to complete the NEPTUNE stage of OVERLORD, but questions that would affect the conduct of the remainder of the European campaign. Three facts signaled the opening of "an operational phase." First, the creation of the 12th Army Group alongside 21 Army Group under the operational control of a single commander finally gave a substantial force over a large enough area to achieve a true operational decision under a single concept of operations. Second, concerted operations by both forces during August's increasingly fluid situation permitted true "operational decisions," rather than tactical fixes to operational problems. The most important result of this was that attrition battles were no longer required, and that large enemy forces could now be targeted for destruction by overrunning them or encircling them. A harmonized rhythm, rather than jerks and starts dictated by local conditions, could now characterize operations. Third, and finally, the bickering and sniping conducted by Tedder and the strategic air commanders would be muffled and finally evaporate as the tactical air forces were able to develop their full range of operations with less need for assistance by heavy bombers, except for two more occasions during the NEPTUNE phase. After this, the primacy of POINTBLANK, not OVERLORD,

would rule strategic air operations. Moreover, for the first time, both the weight and effect of fighter-bombers would be apparent on the battlefield.[214]

These operational changes, however, brought significant command changes and problems as the original Allied command structure matured into operational control by SCAEF and SHAEF with the elimination and creation of headquarters. Not simply the campaign plan, but the nature and evolution of operations under the plan, sparked concerns, controversies, and inefficiencies that would exceed those occurring during the first phases of NEPTUNE. Here, the result, however, would not shape a limited timescale and operations as in Normandy, but would effect the conduct of the rest of the war in Europe.

However successful, August was not to prove to be an easy month for controlling operations. Personality, politics, and pride hampered an efficient development of operations, which, under the strain of events, would lead to a dispersion of effort despite the centralization of command. New personalities entered the fray in both the American and Commonwealth camps, and with the addition of a

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[214] Headquarters, Army Air Forces, *Air-Ground Teamwork on the Western Front: The Role of the XIX Tactical Air Command During August 1944* (Washington: Center of Air Force History Reprint, 1945, 1992), 20, 21, passim; *RAF Narrative, IV*, Chapter 4; NARA, RG 331, SHAEF SGS 314.8 to 314.81, I, Box 27, *Despatch By Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory, Allied Expeditionary Air Forces*, 285-297; PRO, Air 37/876, *Report By Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham Concerning Operations by Second Tactical Air Force Between 6th June 1944 and 9th May, 1945*, Second Phase; Army Air Forces Evaluation Board, European Theater of Operations, *The Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations in the European Theater*, 5 May 1944-8 May 1945, 23-255; Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*, Chapter 5. Numerous reports abound of fighter-bombers, particularly at Mortain, being decisive in August. The US Army Air Force hastily produced a historical pamphlet—*Air-Ground Teamwork: The Role of the XIX Tactical Air Command During August 1944*—to celebrate Patton's supporters. Air Vice Marshal (Retired) J.E. Johnson told the author in conversation in 1990 that tactical air was ineffective during the early Normandy operations because of their inability to find targets. "Once they got out of the corn and moved, we killed them." The mobile battle had proved far more conducive to close air support than to breaking positions or attacking defenses.

third Army Group looming, the cracks in the coalition threatened to become chasms.[215]

Following COBRA's success, Montgomery's overriding concern (besides establishing a secure lodgement) was to obtain OVERLORD's second strategic object. the early capture and development of a port or series of ports for the US forces. Through these portals, the great liberation force would be landed and supplied. Cherbourg alone could not accommodate this aim. The Brittany ports, the second strategic object, were the objective of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army.[216]

No change in strategy had been communicated to Montgomery in August, and he proceeded beyond the missions outlined in the Initial Joint Plan. While the Initial Joint Plan had covered operations to capture Cherbourg and the airfields south of Caen, it was Montgomery's issue of his Forecast of Operations, which combined with the NEPTUNE PLAN, that became the basis for the campaign. 21 Army Group issued planning directives for further operations, and Bradley, "hatted" as the "First US Army Group Commander," issued planning directives to Patton in March 1944. Bradley, assuming SHAEF's scheme would go well, would have his own Army Group under Ike by mid-July. Whether Bradley developed his own guidance from Eisenhower, which is doubtful, or discussed operations with Montgomery, which is more likely, it is clear that Patton's missions reflected Montgomery's overall concept demonstrated in the Forecast of Operations.[217] Concerning Brittany, 21 Army Group

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[215] NARA, RG 331, Entry 31, Box 211, Background files for Despatch.

[216] Initial Joint Plan, Section C, Para. 26.

[217] NAC RG 24, Vol.10433, 21 Army Group Planning Forecast of Operations, 26 February 1944; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, Chapter 4; Third Army, *After Action Report: Third US Army, 1 August 1944* [hereafter referred to as *Third Army After Action Report*], I, Special Annex C, Third Army

had issued planning directives for two plans to Bradley as "Commanding General. First US Army Group" to cover the situation unfolding in July. Issued on 22 June 1944 at a meeting, these were followed by a written planning directive. The first, HANDS UP, a combined airborne and seaborne assault, had been planned in mid-June to take advantage of the fact that divisions were being withdrawn from Brittany, leaving low-grade, non-German defensive troops in place. Following the dropping of the British 1 Airborne Division in the Quiberon Bay area, US troops would be landed on beaches in the area up to a strength of two divisions. Additionally, an airfield would be seized for aerial resupply. Heavily reliant on both French resistance (Maquis) and British SAS (Special Air Service) troops, the plan was predicated on Third Army's advance to the south of Avranches and Patton's force being within "three weeks" of linking with the air-sea force.[218]

With the German front nonexistent in front of Third Army and with not enough time to mount both air and sea landings, the logical alternative was LUCKY STRIKE, a plan being formulated at the time of HANDS UP but completed by June's end. SHAEF's logisticians had evaluated the plan, recommending its consideration in lieu of BENEFICIARY or HANDS UP. LUCKY STRIKE's two variants, "A" and "B," were predicated on the remaining enemy strength within the lodgement area

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OUTLINE PLAN-OPERATION OVERLORD, 1-10, Maps 1-7; *Theater General Board Study No. 1*, 21-26.

[218] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10539, File 215A21.013(D17), 21/A.Gp/20720/G(Plans)dated 17 June 1944; NARA RG 407, Entry 427, 101-3.5 1st Army OVERLORD, Box 1978, 21 A Gp/20698/G/(Plans), 24 June 1944, Subject: Subsidiary Operations to further OVERLORD. Commander, British Airborne Troops coordinated the airborne planning directly with 21 Army Group.

facilitating a drive to destroy a portion of the enemy force against the Seine with the remaining portion to be destroyed by a turning movement.[219] (See figures 17–19.)

In LUCKY STRIKE A, if the enemy's strength resided in the south between the Loire and Laval-Le Mans-Chartres, 21 Army Group would press against the weak northern sector, while part of First Army held the southern flank. The "B" variant was predicated on a reverse enemy disposition with its southern formations weak or nonexistent, thus permitting a wide sweep with an armored force along the north bank of the Loire toward Paris where it would block the Paris-Orleans Gap. Simultaneously, minimal troops would be needed to clear Brittany. By August, these conditions existed and Montgomery ordered its execution. Soon, thereafter, SHAEF and 21 Army Group explored an airborne "plug," to be inserted simultaneously in the Orleans Gap (OPERATION TRANSFIGURE) to be the anvil against the armored sweep's hammer.[220]

LUCKY STRIKE filled out the Army Group's controversial Forecast of Operations, giving the campaign a complete "Master Plan." Despite its August implementation, its key components were well known to planners at every level to

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[219] NAC, RG 24, Volume 24, File 10540, File 215A21.013 (D28) SHAEF/17100/41/Plans (file 34383)-Op "LUCKY STRIKE"; NARA File 1013.5, "Operation Lucky Strike," ibid.; NARA, ML-200 LUCKY STRIKE, ibid.; Belchem, *Victory in Normandy*, ibid. The conceptual framework of this plan, the drive to the neck of the peninsula on the right flank, can be found in planning sketches begun in April at 21 Army Group. While critics may believe this is another attempt to predate the "master plan," the planning phase and the first look at the second strategic object no doubt occurred at this time, and the logic of seeing this concept of operation as both feasible and desirable is unquestionable. Documentary evidence exists that this plan had received priority emphasis by the plans staff at 21 Army Group early in June.

[220] Ibid.

include the critical shift of effort from Brittany to the east to complete the destruction of the enemy in the lodgement area. [221]

While the drama of Patton's rapid drive captured the imagination, the German operational reserve—the panzer divisions—remained in front of Second Army and the newly created Canadian First Army. The Canadians began their attack coincident with COBRA.[222] Not wishing to insert a new headquarters for the vital attack, Montgomery gave Lt. Gen. Crerar 1st Corps on the east flank, while keeping Simonds' 2 Canadian Corps temporarily within Dempsey's sector. Crerar's immediate clash with his new subordinate, Lt. Gen. J.T. Crocker (as difficult a personality as Montgomery), soon became the trip wire for launching Crerar's Canadian nationalist campaign to assure that his command was treated not merely as a part of the British Army but as a full ally in a Commonwealth Army Group. It was a theme that would hamper later operations and one that would be both invisible to and unreceiving of sympathy from SHAEF.[223]

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[221] LC, *Papers of General George S. Patton* [hereafter referred to as *Patton Diary*], July 7, 1944; Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 699. Patton was briefed by Bradley on what was LUCKY STRIKE B. Characteristically, Patton considered the idea broached to him by Bradley in discussion as an "American idea." M.505 had outlined the concept in June; Bradley would have also been aware of the plan due to work done at First Army. Bradley, on 29 June, wrote Montgomery concerning the wide sweep to the west south of Paris: "I feel that this is entirely feasible due to the fact that he [the enemy] has placed so much of his strength in front of Dempsey." Note this idea percolated at the time the Americans were believed to be capable of launching a breakout in the west on 3 July. Bradley needed three more weeks to reach his start line, for what was then called COBRA.

[222] NAC, RG 24, Volume 11001, *War Diary, Lt. Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, 1st Canadian Army*, 1-31 July 1944, Memorandum of Conference with C-in-C 21 Army Group, 20 July 1944. Crerar assumed command of the 3rd, 49th, 51st, and 6th Airborne Divisions, an all-British force.

[223] NAC, RG 24, *Crerar War Diary*, op. cit., Memorandum of Conversation with GOC 1st BRIT CORPS, COMMENCING 1015 HRS 24 JULY 1944; MEMORANDUM ON MEETING WITH C-IN-C 21 ARMY GROUP AT TAC HQ 21 ARMY GROUP, COMMENCING 1500 HRS 25 JUL; *Montgomery Log*, 26 July 1944. Montgomery's recorded entry is sympathetic to Crerar, though his confidential note to Alanbrooke shows his lack of faith in Crerar's command technique.

Following their role in the battle for Bourguebous Ridge, OPERATION ATLANTIC, 2 Canadian Corps' Simonds new mission placed him opposite the strongest concentration of enemy troops on the entire Allied front. Of the seven panzer divisions facing Dempsey, five-plus of the panzer divisions fronted the Canadian sector[224]. While Simonds briefed deep objectives with an "on-order" exploitation south of the heavily fortified Verrieres Ridge, he personally believed his mission more of a holding attack for Bradley's attack, and that the force ratio on his front precluded a breakthrough.[225]

SPRING proved to be one of the bloodiest operations fought by Canadian troops, and characteristically received no comment or credit by SHAEF, or the Americans. Bradley had emerged as winning the war in Europe. Ike signaled Montgomery, reinforcing what Montgomery had outlined for him,

> Above all the dislocation of enemy forces you have engineered on your extreme right must be exploited to the full. I am counting on you and as always will back you to the uttermost limit.[226]

Resonating with the boss's confidence, Monty replied with his situation report, that,

> I have ordered Dempsey to throw all caution overboard and to take any risks he likes and to accept any casualties and to step on the gas for Vire. . . . On the West flank the battle is going splendidly. . . . It begins

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[224] Stacey, *Victory Campaign*, III, 183-185; 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 149, 25 July 1944. Montgomery's G-2 assessed that, having been forewarned by the abortive 24 July pre-COBRA air attack, the Germans were prepared for the assault, a fact that did not help troops in the target area, but which assisted movement of reserves and the preparedness of the defenses in depth.

[225] Stacey, *Victory Campaign*, III, 186.

[226] EL, Correspondence File, cable, personal for Montgomery, July 28, 1944. Eisenhower states, reinforcing Montgomery's current assessment (M.515), "Am delighted that your basic plan has begun brilliantly to unfold with Bradley's initial successes," and that he "beg[s] of you to insist that Canadian and 2nd British Armies carry out their assignments with vigor and determination so that Bradley may bring your plan to full fruition."

> to look as if the general plan on which we have been working for so long is at last going to pay dividends.[227]

As July ended, the frequent sypathetic messages between Montgomery and Eisenhower seemed to indicate that each finally understood the other, that Eisenhower seemed confident that the campaign would unfold both quickly and successfully, and that all was well within the Allied camp. Even the activation of Bradley's 12th Army Group on 1 August, with Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges moving up from Deputy Commanding General to Commanding General of First US Army, and the introduction of Third US Army under Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., seemed uneventful, with Montgomery retaining operational control of the US forces. Once seen by the Americans as another Declaration of Independence from the British, Bradley's move to command 12th Army Group lacked the comfort of an operational SHAEF headquarters on the continent to separate it from Montgomery's plans or broad control.[228]

SHAEF had believed it would be able to assume control of the lodgement by about D+45, and Montgomery's role had been loudly touted (behind his back) as minimal and temporary.[229] The hard slog on the continent failed to make the phase-lines drawn by the planners, leaving no room either to fully develop the base support area or to provide room for a burgeoning SHAEF Headquarters to occupy. Apart from a small camp claiming to be "a tactical headquarters," Eisenhower had few staff and

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[227] EL, Correspondence File, M-68.

[228] NARA, RG 331, entry 201, Box 277, After-Action Report, 12th Army Group, August 1944. This report contains orders for activation, background of the headquarters, and order of battle and senior personnel rosters for 12th Army Group. Complete organizational data and staff reports for the entire war are included in 12th Army Group Files.

limited facilities to deal with his own responsibilities, let alone to take over Montgomery's ground command role. An eager commander, content to delegate his administrative and political responsibilities, might have moved forward to take over the campaign, Eisenhower didn't, at least not completely or overtly.[230]

Success would test the coalition's mettle. SHAEF's 29 July Weekly Intelligence Summary of the previous week trumpeted successes but carefully laid bare the problem at hand. Bradley's forces had yet to penetrate the operational depth of the German forces and their open and vulnerable rear areas, but the prediction of German reaction was clear:

> Within the WEST, there have been quite considerable changes. Fifteenth Army has consigned some more of its fat, and Seventh Army some more of its skeleton, to the battle cauldron: the enemy seems finally to have realized that, if the line in NORMANDY collapses, the game is pretty nearly up, and is willing therefore, to go on feeding divisions from other sectors to the flames as often as required and as rapidly as practicable.[231]

Two days earlier, when Montgomery issued M.515, he sought to fine-tune the swing by First Army with synchronized moves by Dempsey, who was ordered to produce a six-division attack on First Army's left flank near Caumont. VII Corps' breakthrough would be expanded to six corps in three armies. He added that

> [T]he main blow of the whole Allied plan has now been struck on the western flank. . . . The armies on the eastern flank must keep up the pressure in the CAEN area. . . . Second British Army must hurl itself

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[229] EL, *Papers of Lt. Gen. Harold R. Bull* [hereafter referred to as *Bull Papers*], Memorandum: Proposed Command Organization After D Day, 9 May 1944.

[230] The Americans believed Monty fought the creation of the 12th Army Group. This was not true. I have found no documents substantiating this claim.

[231] SHAEF G-2, Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 19, for the week ending 29 July 1944, 2.

> into the fight in the CAUMONT area so as to make easier the task of the American armies fighting hard on the western flank.[232]

OPERATION BLUECOAT, Dempsey's attack, began on 30 July, three days earlier than the deadline mandated in M-515. Montgomery's earlier divisional shift had placed Dempsey's weight of effort west of the panzers. Dempsey's attack would block for Bradley's advance, a two-corps flank guard. Crerar was ordered to keep the enemy fixed in his sector. The attack was designed to do several things. In seizing key terrain, and by running up the east side of the Vire River, it split the German boundary of the Seventh Army and Panzer Group West as well as knocking the props out of a terrain-based defense and withdrawal designed to swing back the German line and contain the Allies in front of the Seine. Dempsey's key objective, Mt. Pincon (near Caumont) was the last major terrain feature east of the Vire. Attacking across a series of perpendicular ridges and streams, 8 corps found that the increasingly hilly country offered the enemy viewpoints from which to coordinate fires and counterattacks.[233] (See figures 20 and 21.)

Planned with eight target areas for heavy bomber saturation attack, Dempsey's 8 and 30 Corps launched three infantry and one armored division in a sector only nine miles wide. (See figure 22.) More than 1,300 heavy and medium bombers were ticketed to drop their loads from a mere 1,500 feet, though poor visibility caused more than 200 aircraft not to bomb. Mt. Pincon fell on 1 August, and the attack continued

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[232] M.515, 27-7-44, 3.

[233] *Second Army History*, 163-171, Appendix B, Chapter III; NAC, RG 24, volume 10542, File 215A21.016(9), Main Headquarters First Cdn Army, 30 July 44, NOTES ON MEETING WITH C-IN-C 21 ARMY GROUP, 29 JUL 44. It is probable that Montgomery's rush to move up Dempsey's attack was sparked not only by the move of panzers westward, but by the shift of divisions from the Pas de Calais area, which would free the panzer divisions in front of Crerar to go into local or front reserve.

southward despite increasing resistance. Five infantry and four panzer divisions were in front of Dempsey, but only three weakened infantry divisions barred the axis of attack, with no reserves in depth. As Second Army gained depth, two panzer divisions moved into sector over two consecutive nights, with a third following on 6 August. Second Army estimated this force to include 340 tanks and 175 assault guns, including estimated 80 Tiger tanks and 125 Panthers. Mines and antitank guns were particularly heavy in Dempsey's sector, and Dempsey's slower-moving force again became a shield for the Americans whose advance was then lightly opposed .[234]

Bradley's initial Army Group directive, issued on 29 July and effective at 1200 hours, on 1 August as 12th Army Group became operational, had parroted Montgomery's 27 July orders. In it, Third Army was to turn west to take Brittany while First Army continued to drive south to Mortain-Vire.[235]

Within several days, Bradley wrote his army commanders privately, spurning the official "Letters of Instruction" required by American staff doctrine. Reiterating the formal instructions, he gave specific short-term objectives: for First Army to secure Vire and Mortain, and for Third Army to secure a line to protect 12th Army Group's flank while additionally seizing Quiberon Bay and bypassing St. Malo if "its reduction takes too large a force and too much time."[236]

Bradley's success and the shift of enemy forces over time from Brittany spurred Montgomery to finalize LUCKY STRIKE's execution. Until this point,

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[234] Ibid., 165, 168; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 70-73; *Montgomery's Scientists*, 87-93.

[235] *12th Army Group Report of Operations*, V, Appendix D, 65-67.

[236] NARA, RG 331, Entry 199, Box 101, 12th Army Group, 371.3 Military Objectives, I, "Directive for Current Operations," 2 August 1944.

Monty had ordered forces that accomplished the plan's initial objectives, but had not fully committed his forces to the plan's entire course of action. With the Germans conforming by maintaining strength on Crerar's front and at Dempsey's left, wheeling both Army Groups eastward against the Seine was possible. Montgomery also had confirmation that Lt. Gen. Brian Horrocks was en route to take over 30 Corps, Bucknall's failing having been that "he is very slow; he does his stuff in the end but is always 24 hours late".[237]

Montgomery believed that the enemy's defense could be disintegrated, having knocked out the key "rivets" holding that defense together. (See figure 16.) His M.516 directive finalized Third Army's swing both into Brittany and south of First Army, Second Army's conforming attack to shield First Army, and the Canadian assault from Caen toward Falaise. He summarized his concept to assure its understanding:

> The broad strategy of the Allied Armies is to swing the right flank round towards PARIS, and to force the enemy back against the SEINE—over which all the bridges have been destroyed Paris and the sea.

A strong airborne, air-landed force would land

> in the CHARTRES area at a suitable moment—thus blocking the gap between the Seine at PARIS and LOIRE at ORLEANS.[238]

Privately, Montgomery was ecstatic, and considering the trials of SHAEF's lack of confidence and Tedder's conspiring to effect his relief and humiliation, he felt that the campaign's operations were proceeding as he had planned them. He now

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[237] *Montgomery Log*, 31 July, August 3.

[238] M516, 4-8-44.

considered it timely to issue "orders for the destruction of the German forces south of the SEINE."[239]

These orders were aggressive, flexible, and oriented toward destroying the enemy by maneuver. From the time of the COBRA breakout, Montgomery had added, within his directives, exhortations to his commanders laying down what the British Army referred to as "operational policy" and what the Americans more mundanely included as "coordinating instructions" in their more rigidly formatted orders. Beginning with M.515 ("we must secure the Brittany ports before the winter is on us"), he expanded his views as the front became more fluid.[240] In M.516, noting the possibility of breaking the entire front, he noted:

> To achieve this great result, very determined and energetic action is necessary on the part of us all.
>
> Once a gap appears in the enemy front we must press into it, and through it, and beyond it into the enemy rear areas.
>
> Enemy personnel and equipment must be written off in large quantities. Everyone must go all out, all day and every day.[241]

In the same directive, Montgomery ticketed Crerar's army to attack Falaise. While this attack was being prepared, he issued further orders in M-517, orders that would not only dramatically change the nature and direction of the Normandy campaign, but would lead to a reevaluation of SHAEF's yet-to-be-unveiled campaign plan for Northwest Europe. Montgomery's appreciation noted that the enemy was falling back "to some new line" yet unknown and that "he is definitely trying to pivot

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[239] *Montgomery Log*, 4-5 August 1944.

[240] Ibid., M.515.

[241] Ibid., M.516.

on the CAEN area." Most important, he noted that if the enemy held on a succession of possible defensive lines in front of the Canadian attack, this would provide "the chance for our right flank to swing round his southern flank and thus cut off his escape."[242]

He announced his revised concept:

Plan in Outline

(a) To pivot on our left, or northern flank.

(b) To swing hard with our right along the southern flank and in towards PARIS, the gap between PARIS and ORLEANS being closed ahead of our advance.

(c) To drive the enemy up against the R. Seine, all bridges over which between PARIS and the sea will be kept out of action.

The Canadians would drive to Falaise to assist Dempsey, then shift their main effort to their left toward Lisieux-Rouen as the battle shifted eastward. Dempsey would lead with his right toward Argentan and eastward. Bradley's Army Group, while simultaneously clearing Brittany with minimal troops, would have its "main business to the east." Moving east, Montgomery designated Bradley's right (Patton) as the main effort. But his plan went beyond the original "press the enemy against the Seine" plan that he announced earlier. The maneuver had changed from frontal attack to turning movement. He directed 12th Army Group:

> Plans will be made for the right flank to swing rapidly eastwards, and then north-eastwards towards PARIS; speed in this movement is the basis of the whole plan of operations.

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[242] M.517, 6-8-44.

Reiterating his intention for an airborne plug to be inserted in the Orleans Gap. he further directed Bradley to incorporate the plan being coordinated by British 1 Airborne Corps with SHAEF "to block the escape gap for the enemy between PARIS and ORLEANS."

Perhaps more dramatically, in noting how far and formal the air-ground operational dimension had evolved with Leigh Mallory and not Tedder calling the shots, he added an entire section titled "Air Support." Incorporating both a "weight of effort" and specific tasking decision, it stated:

> The Air C-in-C has been asked to direct the air effort so as to further the general plan. . . .
>
> In particular he has been requested :
>
> (a) to direct his main power to help the rapid swing of our right flank toward the SEINE.
>
> (b) to prevent all the enemy movement across the SEINE between PARIS and the sea, so far as is possible.

Montgomery's new operational policy was:

> It must be impressed on all commanders that now is the time to press boldly and to take great risks.
>
> If we can achieve the intention as given in para 5 above [Intention], and achieve it quickly, we shall have hastened the end of the war.[243]

The evolving campaign, however, was dogged by Bradley's own desire for independence and Eisenhower's new role as kibitzer in residence. Thus, the problematic circumstances of battle, which had not changed appreciably from the earliest days, again were screened through a prism of national jealousies and distrust as well as fanned by the politics of SHAEF and the airmen.

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[243] Ibid., M.517.

Again, these problems centered on 21 Army Group's role in dealing with the main strength of the enemy's armor and his eastern front quality SS Divisions. Additionally, the problems of a lack of infantry replacements; grave artillery ammunition shortages due to high expenditure rates and the inability of the across-the-beach supply system to keep pace with constant battle; the necessity to stop battle to coordinate heavy air attacks as deep substitutes for artillery; and the bureaucratically slowed-motion response of the airmen to shift air attacks to support friendly efforts or to challenge enemy counterattacks, meant that maintaining fire and movement superiority in a fluid situation teetered as much on local luck as on the timing and coordination by commanders.

GOODWOOD had underscored these issues with 500 burning Allied tanks and thousands of Allied casualties. Eisenhower, the airmen, and the Americans had responded by citing Montgomery's "caution" as the problem. Yet here, Montgomery had changed his own rules on attrition; he would press attacks regardless of casualties, rather than recock to "tee up" another battle. He was determined to finish the lodgement phase of the campaign within the 90-day period outlined by the 1943 planners, the fast-approaching winter rather than the unsupported logic of a three-month campaign being his operative concern.[244]

The enemy, however, was neither defeated nor on the ropes. The apparent slide to defeat, envisioned due to the "pivot" of the enemy line from Caen to Avranches and the passage of Third US Army's armor to fan out in an unprecedented 270-degree arc west, south, and east seemingly could not be stopped. The German

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[244] *Montgomery Log*, 4 August 1944.

High Command was of two minds in assessing the first week of August. Hitler's generals wanted a fighting withdrawal to a defendable line, probably on the far side of the Seine. The Fuhrer, operationalizing the German tendency to counterattack every advance, wanted a counteroffensive to cut the thin neck of the Allied line at Avranches. The Vire-Mortain area would be the concentration area for Hitler's panzers.[245] (See figure 16.)

Montgomery's operations followed on BLUECOAT's success to press its right, with Dempsey and Hodges shifting corps to close the gap at Vire (that British reconnaissance troops had abandoned) to permit the commitment of the US V Corps and XIX Corps. While Americans battled to gain abandoned ground, a valuable lesson—that battles developing along "Allied" boundaries cannot be easily shifted to accommodate short-term tactical necessities without close cooperation and the surrender of command of units in place rather than ground already held—was again demonstrated and lost.[246]

Meanwhile, the Caen-Falaise problem again loomed as key in a campaign based upon multiple, complementary attacks. No longer content to merely fix panzers in the area, Montgomery wanted a general advance to assist the swing of 12th Army

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[245] Joachim Ludewig, *The German Retreat From France in 1944*, Draft English Translation (Freiburg: Rombach Publisher Military Research Office, 1994), 43-53.

[246] CMH, *Diary of Major W. Sylvan*, 2-5 August 1944; *Dempsey Diary*, 2-5 August; D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 423; *Patton Diary*, ibid. Boundary issues posed fatal results several times throughout the war and were most difficult at Army Group boundaries. In this case, Montgomery acceded to American desires to have maneuver room to introduce another corps in their narrow sector. Having failed to keep up, the American attack failed, though analysts have damned Montgomery for the move. Montgomery did not want to introduce Third Army until room had been gained in turning the corner at Avranches. Montgomery's view was based purely on space to conduct operations. Lack of space to develop operations would prove critical in slowing the following operations. Bradley and Patton viewed this as a political move on Montgomery's part. Whenever proven wrong on military counts, it was always Patton's and Bradley's policy to blame Monty. More timely intelligence concerning

Group and the inside turn of Dempsey's Second Army. Falaise would be the internal pivot point for 21 Army Group's full shift to the east and northeast. The operational problem facing the debutante army, however, was the *same* one that faced every major 21 Army Group offensive. The enemy "had the advantage of dominating ground, good fields of fire and very strongly prepared defenses."[247] (See figure 23.)

Crerar designated Simonds to lead the attack, code-named TOTALIZE. Prior to receiving the warning order for the Falaise attack, Monty had asked Crerar to "keep the Boche worried"—an order which the Canadian passed on to 2 Corps to "put on further prods to continue to pin the enemy down."[248] Crerar laid out the basic concept for Simonds on 3 August. Late on the afternoon of the 4th, Montgomery, Leigh Mallory, Crerar, Simonds, Broadhurst, and Crerar's airman, Air Vice-Marshal L.O. Brown of 84 Group, discussed the plan.[249]

Simonds' attack was to be the true combat debut of the Canadian First Army, and Crerar and Simonds, gunners both, were to ensure it was a fire-supported attack to rival the Canadian offensive of August 1918. Bombers would, in the GOC's words, provide "overwhelming fire." Moreover, Simonds had added a new dimension to the attack—60 improvised armored personnel carriers made from gun-stripped "priest" self-propelled artillery mounts. Simonds insisted that the infantry be carried onto their

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German intentions would have prevented some of this problem. ULTRA's frequent last-minute decrypts did not provide adequate time to react at the operational level.

[247] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10494, File 212C1.8000(D17), The Campaign In North West Europe 6 June-8 May 1945: A Review, para. 54. Brig. C.C. Mann, CBE, DSO. (Mann, Chief of Staff of First Canadian Army, delivered this as a lecture. A shorter version was delivered earlier in the war concerning operations in 1944.)

[248] *Crerar War Diary*, 1 August 1944; NAC RG 24, Volume 10798, "War Diaries," 2 CDN Corps, n.d, "Notes for War Diary 'G' Branch, Main Hq. 2 CDN Corps," n.d. Crerar had issued a warning order to Simonds concerning an attack toward Falaise on 28 July.

actual objectives; it would be a mounted battle. Assessing the terrain as requiring a double breakin battle, and favoring the German use of their long-range weapons as well as counterattacks by their close reserve (the 12 SS Panzer Division), Simonds intended to strip them of long-range observation and direct fires by attacking at night. He outlined what would be the controversial element of the plan:

> In essence, the problem is how to get armour through the enemy gun screen to sufficient depth to disrupt the German anti-tank gun and mortar defence, in country highly suited to the tactics of the latter combination.

Appreciating that "it requires practically the whole day bomber lift to effect" the destruction or neutralization of the armor-mortar defense, and that if two defense zones are to be penetrated, a pause with the loss of speed and momentum must be accepted," he made his plan. The only alternative was a successful infiltration and night penetration of the first line, with the bombers deployed against the second. Breaking the battle into phases, Simonds projected the first breakin for 2300 on 8 August, using full bomber support and two infantry divisions plus two tank brigades. The second line, to be broken by the attack of two armored divisions (the "break-through"), would be assaulted tentatively at 1200 on D+1, also following a heavy bomber assault. An exploitation would follow by the two armored divisions plus a fresh infantry division leap-frogged forward. On the eve of the attack, Simonds had predicted that the enemy would react immediately to fill the gaps created by the preparatory bombing, but that an immediate move by the attackers closely following the bombing would negate any attempt by the reserve to restore the front line. He

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[249] Ibid., *Crerar War Diary*, 4 August; ibid., Appendix. 1, Remarks to Senior Officers CDN Army, Operation TOTALIZE, 2.

therefore predicted that the real battle would begin in the area between the enemy's defenses, and that the second line could not be effectively defended until after first light.[250]

Crerar held an orders conference on 5 August, giving a formal address to initiate the operation that included his operational ideas concerning initiative, weapons usage, and maintaining momentum in the attack. Afterwards, printed copies were circulated to commanding officers. Having been given more than a week to "tee up" this operation, Crerar was dismayed to find that the defense had side-stepped into the line two fresh infantry formations—the 272d and 89th Infantry Divisions—and had shifted the previous front owners, the 1 SS and 12 SS Panzer Divisions, into reserve. Crerar widened Simonds' front with the Polish Armoured Division to accompany the 4th Canadian Armoured Division in the "second break-through" phase. Simonds agreed that the key would be maintaining movement for the attack in its early phases to offset the strengthened defenses in depth. Simultaneously, Montgomery's latest directive, M.517, had outlined his own advance to the Seine, a key element of which would be the First Canadian Army's seizure of Falaise to permit its full eastward wheel onto the axis Lisieux-Rouen, to place it in its pre-D-Day planned sector to clear the Channel Coast.[251]

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[250] NAC RG 24, Volume 10649, File 215C1.016(D15), 2 Aug 44, Memorandum to Maj.-Gen. R.F.L. Keller, GOC 3d Cdn Inf Div., Appreciation, Operation TOTALIZE, 1 Aug 44; Outline Plan (TOTALIZE) n.d.; Appreciation, 7 Aug 44, Enemy Reactions; 2 CDN CORPS INSTRUCTION NUMBER FOUR OPERATION "TOTALIZE," 5 Aug 44.

[251] *Montgomery Log*, 5 August 1944; RG 24, *Crerar Papers*, I, File 958C.009(040), "Notes on Telephone Conversation with 2 CDN Corps, 1745, 7 August, Operation Totalize"; *Crerar War Diary*, ibid., Memorandum to Lieut.-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar from G.C. Simonds, Lieut.-Gen., "Operation Totalize," 6 August 1944. Montgomery visited Crerar and emphasized the necessity of the armor closely following the bombing strike, as well as the relationship of Crerar's operation to the ongoing Mortain counterattack.

12th Army Group's activation had done more than just salve American sensitivities. Bradley's own operations had propelled him into a new realm. He had written Eisenhower in late July noting that his First Army Headquarters, "is riding high." Bradley noted that he had predicted being in Coutances in 48 hours, and was now only slightly behind.[252] Two days later, Bradley expressed concern, telling VIII Corps' Commander Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton that:

> Some people are more concerned with the headlines and the news they'll make tha[n] [i]n the soundness of their tactics. I don't care if we get Brest tomorrow or ten days later. If we cut the peninsula, we'll get it anyhow. But we can't risk a loose hinge.

The criticism was of Middleton's new boss, the Third Army commander. Bradley, whose mistrust of Patton's judgment from his experiences in Sicily had not yet subsided, then went forward and personally overrode and bypassed Patton, ordering the 79th division to build up near the area in question. During the conference with Middleton he noted, speaking of Patton:

> He's not used to having three or four German divisions hit him. He doesn't know what that means yet.

While Patton later took the verbal assault well when they met over the incident, Bradley's G-3 spoke virulently to Bradley's aide, noting that

> Patton's orders specifically directed that he build a firm line before turning, his movement was a violation of the [12th Army] group directive that he had been given.[253]

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[252] EL, Correspondence, Letter Bradley to Eisenhower, 28 July 1944.

[253] *Hansen Diary*, 2, 5 August 1944. The G-3, Brig. Gen. A. Franklin Kibler, complained later that Patton continued to ignore orders and plans.

Patton, in fact, had ordered the 5th Armored Division to that same area, so Patton cancelled these orders. Patton moved to assemble a three-division force to hold the "hinge," the 4th Armored and 8th Division to move on Rennes, and the 6th Armored and 83d Division to press westward into Brittany.[254]

Bradley's earlier prescience proved incorrect concerning the Brittany ports, but deadly accurate concerning the threat of a counterattack. SHAEF's intelligence noted that the Germans had failed to form a hinge upon which to turn their front due to First and Second Armies' attacks, but that panzer divisions migrating from the Caen front launched limited counterattacks near Vire on 3 August. SHAEF estimated enemy tank strength at about 1,300, and noted that four panzer divisions belonging to the 47th Panzer and II SS Panzer Corps had moved westward after thinning their eastern sector. The panzer threat had shifted from the Caen front, but Dempsey and Hodges "shared" the panzer division symbols fronting their lines, roughly three divisions each, with the newly arrived SS Panzer Corps in front of Second Army. SHAEF, however, did not predict a counterattack as a possible course of action. Rather, they questioned how long the Germans would maintain forces on the Pas de Calais front while their Normandy front crumbled.[255]

ULTRA and other intelligence, however, had portrayed more specific threats. The formation of the Fifth Panzer Army from the battered Panzer Group West and the shift of divisions along the front were accurately portrayed. Moreover, on 6 August

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[254] MHI, *Papers of Lieutenant General Hobart R. Gay*, Third Army Chief of Staff Diary (incl. Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey), 2-3 August 1944; *Third Army After Action Report*, I, 16-20.

[255] SHAEF G-2 Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 20 for the week ending 5 August 1944, 1-4, and Order of Battle Maps; NARA, RG 407, Box 1956, First Army Estimates, 21 June-31 October 44, G-2

several signal intercepts warned of the attack toward Avranches—using 116th. 2d. 1 SS, and 2d SS Panzer Division under 47th Panzer Corps—that would be launched the next day. Additional signals were transmitted and decrypted throughout the night warning Bradley's and Hodges' headquarters.[256]

The corps at the point of impact, Major General "Lightning Joe" Collins' VII, had no advance warning of the German attack and was executing a relief in place of one division by another shortly before the attack.[257] This division, the 30th, prevented a breakthrough, with elements of four attacking panzer divisions, losing about 80 tanks the first day. The full weight of both the 9th and 2 Tactical Air Forces responded with great success. Second Army fought heavily at this time; Mount Pincon had just fallen, and two British corps worked hard at fighting off panzers while continuing their swing to the east and southeast. [258]

Neither Montgomery nor Bradley was shaken by the attack. Hodges' headquarters was confident it would stop the panzers, its current intelligence estimate heading its assessment of enemy capabilities with the words, "When the current

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Estimate No. 13, 1 August 1944. First Army's G-2 had earlier predicted that the most likely enemy course of action would be to defend on a line Trouville-Falaise-Mortain-Rennes.

[256] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 238-245.

[257] Collins, *Lightning Joe*, 250, 251. In discussion at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1983, General Collins assured the author that he had received no warning of the attack from ULTRA or any other source. Bradley had been cautious about the "hinge" since the beginning of Patton's turn toward Brittany, and Collins states that both he and Bradley were concerned about establishing themselves on defensive terrain to prevent a fatal German attack.

[258] SHAEF G-2 Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 21 for the week ending 12 August 1944, 2, Map Enemy Order of Battle in West Normandy; *Second Army History*, 168-173; *Short History of 30 Corps*, 18-21, Maps 7-9; *FUSA Report of Operations* Aug 44–Feb 45, 1 August 1944-February 1945, I, 5-9; MHI, *Ninth Air Force: April to November 1944*: Army Air Forces Historical Study No. 36, 1945, 169-171; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 73-84; *Sylvan Diary*, 7 August 1944, Sylvan notes that Ninth Air Force claimed 109 tank kills on the day the attack began.

Panzer attack is defeated or contained. . . ."[259] Montgomery's first response to the attack was to ask Leigh Mallory to shift the entire weight of air to attack the panzers. Montgomery noted,

> This enemy concentration at MORTAIN, and attack westwards towards AVRANCHES, is a real mistake; if he persists here I will turn the southern wing up northwards to ALENCON and ARGENTAN, and get in behind him.[260]

As First Army blunted the German counterattack, Simonds' Canadians began TOTALIZE at 2330 hours on 7 August. A gain of five miles justified the unique night attack. The momentum, however, was broken by the overly complicated set-piece attack plan. Simonds was unwilling or unable to call off the bombers timed for the second phase, so units sat for six hours after they had penetrated the defenses, as the next echelon filtered through in a passage of lines to their start line. The momentary advantage of a break in the defense had been lost. The second attack was marred by short-bombing by four US bomb groups of the 8th Air Force flying in support. The Germans stopped 4th Canadian Armoured with a hastily thrown together gun-line, and the Polish Armoured Division found itself facing fresh reserves of Tiger and Panther

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[259] FUSA G-2 Estimate, "G-2 Estimate No. 14, 8 August 1944"; *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45, I*, 3-13; *Hansen Diary*, 8 August 1944; *Sylvan Diary*, 7 August 1944; *Third Army COS Diary (Gaffey) 7 August 1944*. The aides' diaries reflect the lack of emotion at the top concerning the German attack.

[260] *Montgomery Log*, 7 August 1944; *Montgomery's Scientists*, 173-180; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 84-92; Gooderson, *Airpower at the Battlefront*, Chapter 3. Montgomery noted that the air forces claimed 120 tank kills. An analysis of air support at Mortain is found in *Montgomery's Scientists*. Gooderson offers commentary on the results of air force claims being investigated on the ground, and the furor raised over Army operational research teams studying close air support effectiveness. Coningham, of course, refused to cooperate.

tanks. TOTALIZE halted after a nine-mile advance on 11 August.[261] Falaise lay some nine miles away.

Hitler's insistence on a counteroffensive doomed his Normandy forces and played into Montgomery's operational design for a drive to the Seine. With BLUECOAT's culmination with the capture of Mount Pincon on 6 August, and the pocket now formed by the defenders of Mortain, the advance of Patton's XV Corps toward Le Mans made a clear but different course of action—an envelopment, rather than destroying the enemy against the Seine—was obvious. The 7 August situation map placed three panzer, eight infantry, and one parachute division in front of 21 Army Group; four panzer, one motorized, and two infantry divisions in front of First Army; and two panzer and three infantry divisions on Patton's eastern front. None were complete, rested formations, and all had been badly battered. With Crerar's Canadians already preparing to cut the German line in front of Dempsey with TOTALIZE on a narrow front, Patton's continuing advance offered more than just easing the run toward the Seine in one sector.[262]

A turning movement had been the centerpiece of LUCKY STRIKE B and had been ordered in M.515 and M.516. Variations of the plan also offered a more northeasterly axis toward Paris with the objective for an "armored force" centered there on the Seine River between Dreux and Paris. Sketched about 20 June, this

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[261] NARA, RG 338, ML-2250, Report No. 146, Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters, "Operations of the First Canadian Army in North-West Europe, 31 July-1 October 44" *RAF Narrative, IV* (Preliminary Report), 5-15; *Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations*, 92-100; *Leigh Mallory Diary*, 8 August 1944. Both Leigh Mallory and Coningham witnessed the short-bombing; Leigh Mallory was highly critical of the 8th Air Force effort, claiming he did not believe the "smoke and dust obscuration" excuse for the bombing.

[262] *Third Army After Action Report*, I, Operations map for August 7, 1944.

possibility was noted by Montgomery in his log on 7 August when he mentioned turning the southern wing northward. (See figure 19.)

Before the Mortain attack, Bradley, when discussing his future plans, noted he wished to bypass Paris from the south and cut off the German armies in front of the British, "right up to Dieppe." More revealingly, his aide, Major Hansen, summarized the discussion concerning a requirement to move toward Calais (apparently due to the V-1 rocket threat):

> [H]e [Bradley] replied that military contingencies require that campaign go as it is planned—that the closest way to the rocket coast will be around through Paris up to the coast. We are on the way, Army boundaries have already swung to the east.

Hansen further elaborated on Bradley's plans:

> Gen hopes to build up on Domfront-Le [Mons] and there collect supplies necessary for movement. Supply may limit the rapidity with which we move towards Paris. Gen hopes to get going by September.
>
> When attack to Paris gets underway, Airbor[ne] will get three divisions.[263]

Hansen, whose brief did not include attending meetings with Montgomery, or apparently reading operations directives and plans, further noted:

> His [Bradley's] airborne plan for employment of armor in swift thrust towards Paris and destruction of German army of 26 divs now facing us is most ambitious yet. He views [it] calmly, weighs its mathematical chances and plots it deliberately. Worked the whole thing out in a series of definite lines tonight, assigning bulk of mission to Third Army.

Finally, quoting his general, Hansen noted:

> "First Army will have plenty of fighting to do where they are now."[264]

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[263] *Hansen Diary*, 6 August 1944.

The failed counteroffensive at Mortain, TOTALIZE's gain toward Falaise, Montgomery's earlier directives, and obviously Bradley, who had embraced Montgomery's plan as his own, left the door wide open for an envelopment. But would the movement be the operationally decisive turning movement earlier sketched out in M.517, or would it be a tighter, tactical envelopment seemingly demanded by the battlefield situation as painted by intelligence?

That answer came from Bradley on 8 August as Eisenhower visited 12th Army Group. Bradley and Eisenhower together decided that a move northward by Patton toward Argentan would bag the remnants of the German Seventh and Fifth Panzer Armies. Executing the turn presumed that Crerar's Canadians would gain Falaise and that Patton could effectively be turned north if the longer move toward Alencon could be temporarily halted. Montgomery agreed, perhaps too hastily. The move would effectively mask much of the Allied force from participating in the trap, and time, not necessarily maneuver mass, would determine the success of the envelopment. Moreover, a tight envelopment lessened the possibility of catching the entire enemy force at the river itself when they defiled to cross.[265]

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[264] Ibid. It is interesting to note, Hansen further adds, "Meanwhile we aides live in Mortal Fear that Patton may unjustly crab [grab?] credit for the breakthrough which was made and sealed before he became active."

[265] *Montgomery Log*, 8 August; *Report of the Supreme Commander*, 43; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 124-130; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 275; *Hansen Diary*, 8 August 1944; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 375, 377. Virtually everyone involved took credit for the idea. As confirmation of his minor status, Bradley's "Boswell" displays no knowledge of his boss's momentous decision. Montgomery appears to have seen little diversion in his original plan and ignores Eisenhower's "presence." He states simply, "I ordered Bradley to halt that spearhead there [referring to Patton near Le Mans], and then operate strongly with 3 or 4 divisions northwards to ALENCON." Of those claiming credit, Montgomery was the one responsible, as Eisenhower issued no order, verbal or otherwise, and Montgomery retained overall command of ground forces. Bradley ignores Eisenhower in his account and fails to signal a change in plan, but takes time to denigrate Montgomery, saying, "As field arbiter on boundaries for Ike, Monty became responsible for coordinating the maneuvers of all four Allied Armies." Significantly, the issue of "fixing the enemy" by continued attack plus destroying him in place, was criticized by Bradley as "squeezing the enemy out of the pocket."

Montgomery did, however, record the connectivity of the new move with his undiminished intentions as stated in M.517; he saw Falaise and Alencon as not simply the key to capturing the retreating Germans, but as a maneuver to ensure that "our advance to the SEINE will be easy."[266] The next day, recognizing the limitations of Bradley's recommendation, he recorded:

> I instructed Bradley that, while operating with his right toward ALENCON, he must be ready to strike quickly from LE MANS towards CHARTRES and PARIS. If the Germans slipped out between ALENCON and FALAISE, then we must swing our right forward to PARIS quickly—as in M.517.[267]

Patton seized the reins, full well feeling the advantage of having minimal opposition. Road clogs, not combat, were his largest impediment. Patton's capable chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Hugh Gaffey, recorded that Patton's orders, written on the 8th but not delivered until morning on the 9th, listed as the purpose of the orders:

> [T]o drive the German army, heretofore confronting the First American Army and Second British and Canadian Armies along the channel coast, against the SEINE between PARIS and ROUEN.[268]

Simonds' attack, battered by German panzer reserves missed by the bombardment, forced a reevaluation of the Falaise attack. Crerar and Simonds, a true gunners' union, planned another set-piece with a massive bomber assault. Convinced that Harris, not Doolittle, could do a better job based on the earlier short bombing, Crerar asked for Bomber Command's night bomber force to strike in daylight on 14

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[266] *Montgomery Log*, 8 August 1944.

[267] Ibid., 9 August 1944.

[268] *Third Army CofS Diary (Gaffey)*, August 8, 1944; *12th Army Group Report of Operations, V*, Letter of Instruction Number Four, 8 August 1944, 77, 78. Gaffey, citing Third Army Letter of Instruction, 8 August 1944, should have noted that Patton's order exceeded his brief. His orders from Bradley were: "Advance on the axis ALENCON-SEES . . . prepared for further action against the enemy flank and rear in the direction of ARGENTAN."

August. (See figure 23.) Shifting the axis of attack westward, the new thrust followed a 690-bomber assault with a push by two infantry divisions and an armored division. "TRACTABLE," Simonds' new effort shifted the direction of attack westward, adding miles to the approach and avoiding TOTALIZE's original path. In addition to the standard staggered defense, approximately ninety 88-mm guns dotted the attack zone. The plan encountered TOTALIZE's double problem: how to break through the defense; how to get the armored force beyond the gun-line. Smoke, not darkness, was seen as the best way to screen the attack.[269]

The attack was bombed during the second air-phase but continued, repeating Simonds' use of armored personnel carriers. The ground fighting soon devolved into fending off German armored counterattacks and breaking the antitank screen laid out in depth. Falaise fell on the 16th after heavy fighting. [270]

As Patton swept westward and the Canadian First Army recocked and fired a second major salvo from the north, the center front bore great weight but little notice in the Allied camp. (See figure 24.) Dempsey's men began to turn south and eastward, while Hodges' First Army continued its movement. The Germans attempted to fight a strong delaying action on all quarters while moving westward toward the funnel caused by the advancing Allied armies. Given the tightening trap, German vehicular

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[269] ML 5220, Canadian Historical Report No. 146, 15-17. Worse still, the Germans captured a complete corps attack order about 12 hours before the attack. This caused at least one AT battery to be moved forward to contest the attack.

[270] Ibid., 17-21.

moves, constricted by the pocket's shrinking size and confined to roads. became air targets ravaged by American and British fighters.[271]

As the situation developed, Montgomery stressed to Dempsey and Crerar the necessity to dominate roads by artillery fire during darkness, and had designated army objectives to define the ring: Crerar (Falaise), Dempsey (Conde), and Bradley (Argentan). Earlier (by 10 August) intelligence had noted that six panzer divisions were reforming for attack on Mortain, intelligence that Montgomery met with the phrase, "Now they are doomed." He reacted quickly to intelligence indicating that a withdrawal would take place by closely coordinating Dempsey and Crerar; Bradley would coordinate operations for the First and Third US Armies. M.518 reflected Montgomery's belief that the Germans would fight between the Seine and the Loire, and that any withdrawal from their general line of Caen-Le Mans would necesitate blocking 12th Army Group's moves. He modified his original intention to

> concentrate our energies on closing the gap behind the main enemy forces, so that we can possibly destroy them where they are now.

The new pocket would be defined by a meeting of Second Army and Canadian First Army at Falaise, while 12th Army Group formed on the line Alencon-Sees-Carrouges. The wider net defined earlier would remain as a contingency mission, as would as airborne planning for the Chartres area. Given the known circumstances,

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[271] *Second Army History*, 174-178; *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45. I*, 14-16; Leigh Mallory Despatch, 60, para. 296; Brereton Greenhous, Stephen J. Harris, William C. Johnston, and William G.P. Rawling, *The Crucible of War: Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, III (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 1994), 317; *RAF Narrative. IV*, 99-102. Leigh Mallory is highly critical of ground commanders for failing to move "bomb-lines," permitting his aircraft to attack targets more closely. The Canadian official history lists phenominal kill claims.

Montgomery had accounted for every operational line; he left the fine points of tactics to those actually in command on the field.[272]

Identifying the actual units within the trap, as to both type and strength, became an imperative to determine how wide the trap should swing, but estimates varied even as the battle continued. First Army's G-2 estimated that elements of 17 divisions plus corps and flak troops were trapped on 15 August a total of about 50,000 troops if none escaped. Significantly, under "Enemy Capabilities," the same report listed that the enemy could continue to hold open the shoulders of "the FALAISE-ARGENTAN gateway," and that the highest probability was that the enemy's next sequence of actions was "to fight a series of delaying actions in rear guard while he retires to the SEINE and the MARNE." British Second Army's G-2 tracked enemy formations but did not speculate on their strengths. Patton's G-2 estimated that on 18 August approximately 75,000 troops and 250 tanks remained in the pocket. The enemy, to date, had extricated about 25,000 men to the east of the Seine, and had approximately 150,000 troops remaining in the Fifteenth Army's 13 divisions in the the Pas de Calais and the lowlands. SHAEF listed 18 divisions within the pocket by 19 August, but made no strength estimate. Montgomery's G-2 told him on the 15th that the bulk of the "fighting portion" of the German army had been trapped; he estimated that though some administrative echelons had exited the corridor, the bulk of the enemy still remained.[273]

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[272] M.518, 11-8-44.

[273] First Army G-2 Estimate No. 16, 15 August 1944; Second Army Intelligence Summaries, 74-78, August 1944; Third Army G-2 Estimate No. 7, 18 August 1944; SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 22, week ending 19 August 1944.

Montgomery set three priorities for the forces circling the pocket: that the gap must be closed, that constant pressure must be kept around the pocket, and that escaping forces must be headed off to the northeast. He ordered Crerar to extend his attacks west to Trun, and Bradley to extend westward to link with the Canadians. As further insurance, the next day he transferred an armored division to Crerar to reinforce a further envelopment from Lisieux. Crerar's moves, if quick, he felt, might "capture over 100,000 Germans."[274]

Falaise would be considered one of the decision points of the campaign. As with the operations in June and July, operations again developed headquarters-centric interpretations. Montgomery again followed traditional command procedure. Visiting or calling his commanders, he followed up orders and conversations with written directives, including his assessments of operations and their relationship to his intentions. He kept Eisenhower informed by both message and letter, as he did the CIGS. At the front, appearances never strayed from the image of a band of brothers, working to finish a campaign without strife or controversy.[275]

The headquarters put differing interpretations on the battlefield actions, interpretations that illustrate the extent of hostility that undergirded basic decisions within the coalition and which made mush of the appearance of a band of brothers.

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[274] *Montgomery Log*, 15-17 August 1944.

[275] Murray, *Eisenhower versus Montgomery*, passim; Martin Blumenson, *The Battle of the Generals: The Untold Story of the Falaise Pocket—The Campaign That Should Have Won World War II* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993), passim. The "Falaise Gap" has spawned a virtual cottage industry of claims for Allied failure, generally divided along national lines. With the exception of Patton and his acolytes, the diary material of the key players is generally absent the hatred manifested by postwar commentators. Falaise is a large part of the American attack on Montgomery and the British. Any belief that the war could have been won there, as claimed by some, can be dispelled by merely counting the number of German divisions that were not engaged there and still holding the north coast. For example, the figures cited by Blumenson are inflated and based upon suspect sources.

SHAEF buzzed with unprecedented smugness. Eisenhower had begun writing Marshall weekly letters outlining "his decisions" on the campaign, decisions that remarkably paraphrased Montgomery's M-series of "General Operational Situation and Directive[s]" that emanated from 21 Army Group following every meeting with Monty's commanders.[276] Once terrified that OVERLORD would meet the Anzio landing's fate of stalemate, Eisenhower now reported that he had cooperated in creating the strategy used in Normandy.[277]

The southern swing, however, had been making spectacular gains and, with Pattonesque flair, Third Army's commander soon convinced Bradley and SHAEF that he was in a "horse race" with the British. Patton, Eisenhower told Marshall, is the "'marching wing' of a great envelopment."[278]

The success of that marching wing, however, became a major bone of contention within Allied command circles, especially since Bradley focused his energy on the envelopment and began to view the annihilation of the German armies in the pocket as his military masterpiece.[279] Montgomery saw a wider operational maneuver designed not merely to finish the enemy west of the Seine, but also to complete the entire campaign in the west. As part of this, he viewed the wider envelopment and the opening of the Orleans Gap to a wide operational move south of

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[276] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2059, 2071.

[277] Ibid., 2059; "Our Strategy is to swing the right flank of the Allied Armies toward Paris, hold the Paris-Orleans gap and to force the enemy back on the Seine."

[278] EL, *Butcher Papers*, Letters Eisenhower to Marshall, August 10, 1944; August 11, 1944; Diary Entry, August 11, 1944.

[279] Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 375. Bradley told Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau on 9 August, "We're about to destroy an entire hostile army . . ." after which, "[W]e'll go all the way to the German border."

Paris and thence to the coast as both decisive, and insurance against problems in the tight, pocket envelopment.[280]

Bradley had halted Patton's push north on 13 August, influenced by ULTRA intelligence that identified elements of three Panzer divisions moving to hold open the shoulders of the pocket for the trapped enemy to flee. The same day, Dempsey recorded the joint decision of Montgomery and Bradley regarding closing the pocket:

> So long as the Northward move of Third Army meets little opposition, the two leading Corps will disregard inter-Army boundaries. The whole aim is to establish forces across the enemy's lines of communications so as to impede—if not prevent entirely—his withdrawal.[281]

This understanding Bradley apparently sought to ignore, and the legend of Monty's ordering a halt was spread both by Bradley's staff and Patton.[282] Moreover, as intelligence began identifying moves of "divisions" within the pocket without the precision of identifying strengths and capabilities, Bradley continued to see Patton as the sole solution. He refused Hodges' request to shift boundaries to permit VII Corps an aggressive move toward the gap.[283] Bradley began moving forces to the northeast to conform with a wider envelopment in front of Paris by Third Army. On 16 August, the day the Canadians closed on Falaise, Bradley ordered V Corps to shift its

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[280] *Hansen Diary*, 12 August. Hansen attacks Montgomery's seeking to take terrain, and not to follow the "principle of destroying the enemy." Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 269-270; M.516, M.517, refutes this claim, which is probably repeated from his boss, Bradley.

[281] *Dempsey Diary*, 13 August 1944.

[282] *Hansen Diary*, 13 August 1944. Hansen records: "It is suggested in G-3 that we were ordered to hold at Argentan rather than to continue to drive to Falaise since our capture of that objective would infringe on the prestige of the forces driving south and prevent them from securing prestige value in closing the trap."

[283] *Sylvan Diary*, 13 August 1944; *Hansen Diary*, 14 August. Hansen claims that the opportunity to close the gap had been lost due to Montgomery, and that the drive to the Seine was the proof of this admission.

headquarters east to assume control of two of Patton's divisions. Seeking to speed operations, Patton placed them under his own chief of staff and several staff officers to form a "provisional corps" that he intended to launch into an attack. The V Corps commander, upon his arrival, disapproved the dispositions, plan, and arrangements, and he halted the attack for a full day to make his own plan.[284]

The Americans further extended east and closed with the Polish Armoured Division at Chambois on the 19th.[285] At the close of the pocket battle, elements of six panzer divisions attempted to break out from within or to batter the Polish Armoured to break a hole from without, indicating that the battle for the pocket had not been easy, nor had the enemy been willing to surrender despite their position. Montgomery recorded that elements of fourteen divisions were "more *in* than *out* of the pocket." He noted that these were mostly infantry divisions, and that the SS and panzers, though mauled, probably escaped. Airpower had taken a terrible toll on German equipment but again had failed to seal the battlefield.[286]

Coningham railed at ground commanders for their use of "a rigid Inter-Army Group boundary" that precluded targeting during the closing of the gap. Considering

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[284] Martin Blumenson, "General Bradley's Decision at Argentan (13 August 1944)," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1959, 1987), 401-418. Blumenson, the American official historian, miscasts Montgomery's intentions, 404.

[285] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, 14-18 and Situation Map 1; Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 507, fn 7; 527-530; *History of V Corps* (Headquarters, V Corps, n.d.), 182-188, operations maps 16-20 August 44.

[286] *Montgomery Log*, 19 August; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, see map 25; *Second Army History*, 175-181; Second Army which, according to Bradley, did little but squeeze the Germans out, suffered more than 5,000 casualties from 13 to 21 August, as well as the loss of 101 tanks destroyed and a further 118 damaged. The number of enemy that escaped is estimated to be 20,000 to 40,000, but their actual survival during the retreat is unknown. Large POW hauls were netted in late August and early September, further clouding the issue.

this another case of army rigidity, he blamed army generals for preventing "completing the work of the air forces in an annihilation role."[287]

The pocket battle had prevented a deliberate withdrawal and expedited the wider envelopment to complete the planned lodgement position.[288] Focusing on the Falaise pocket, however, had prevented the wider turning movement from gathering greater spoils. First Army, and not the Third, should have provided the bulk of the enveloping and fixing force west of the Seine while Patton raced off toward Paris, as Monty and Patton had individually envisioned. However, the battle of movement continued at a faster pace beyond the pocket as the attacks and exploitation operations of early August evolved into a pursuit operation by 12th Army Group. 21 Army Group battled the only forces maintaining a defensive posture in the West.

The invasion of Southern France, OPERATION DRAGOON, began on 15 August. Under the temporary control of the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, the DRAGOON force was planned to come under SCAEF, as was the operational control of 21 and 12th Army Groups.[289] Recognizing this future, Montgomery met with his commanders on the 19 August to shape the campaign's next phase.

On 20 August, M.519 announced Montgomery's intentions. To complete the destruction of the enemy forces in northwest France, his plan was to continue his battle,

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[287] Coningham, *Report on Operations 2 Tactical Air Force*, 71-73; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 112.

[288] *Second Army History*, 182. A captured II SS Panzer Corps order indicated that a four-line delay and withdrawal to the Seine had been planned.

[289] Pogue: *The Supreme Command*, 265-266, 272-278.

> [t]hen to advance northwards, with a view to the eventual destruction of all enemy forces in north-east France.[290]

As always, Montgomery began his directive with his "operational policy" for the future. He called for relentless attacks, stating:

> I call on all commanders for a great effort. Let us finish off the business in record time.[291]

Montgomery ordered the reduction of "the bottle" that had been the Falaise pocket while directing that 12th Army Group's wide envelopment along the south bank of the Seine to Louviers and Elbeuf to continue severing the German lines of withdrawal to the Seine. Importantly, he directed that Bradley

> take advantage of any opportunity to secure a bridgehead over the SEINE in the MANTES area, or anywhere else.

He also directed that 12th Army Group

> [a]ssemble its right wing west and southwest of PARIS, and [it] will capture that city when the Commanding General considers the suitable moment has arrived—and not before.

The capture of Paris was to be on Eisenhower's orders only, but this was not the key intention published in the directive. Montgomery's 18th section defined his operational vision and intent for finishing the campaign. It was, he thought, in accord with Bradley's own ideas, a perception that would be changed in the next days. He directed Bradley's forces:

> Having secured PARIS, or passed to the south of it, 12 Army Group will advance to the general area ORLEANS-TROYES-CHALONS-REIMS-LAON-AMIENS.

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[290] M-519, 20-8-44.

[291] Ibid.

It will be so disposed in this general area that it retains the ability to operate north-eastwards towards BRUSSELS and AACHEN, while simultaneously a portion of the Army Group operates eastwards towards the SAAR.

Alternately, the whole Army Group may be required to move to the N.E., on the right flank of 21 Army Group.[292]

21 Army Group's own tasks involved destroying the forces "in the bottle," then moving rapidly to the Seine with 2 Army preparing to move to the Pas de Calais and Canadian First Army taking Havre "very early." As with his Normandy directives for the breakout strategy (M.505) and then the execution of LUCKY STRIKE B (M.517), this directive was intended to become an outline campaign plan, fine-tuned as operations developed. Montgomery, however, had recognized both his position and the necessity for future coordination of a campaign. He stated early in the order:

> General Policy for Forward Movement
>
> As the situation develops, the Supreme Allied Commander will be issuing orders regarding the general movement of the land armies.
>
> Meanwhile, we must be so disposed that we can very quickly develop operations in any way he requires, and to meet any situations that may suddenly arise.
>
> As a first step we have got to cross the SEINE, and to get so disposed beyond it—tactically and administratively—that we can carry out quickly the orders of the Supreme Allied Commander.[293]

Crossing the Seine had been Montgomery's idea—an idea unanimously approved without consideration both at SHAEF and at 12th Army Group. The order reflected the mood of "getting it over in record time," but it also put on hold the basis for the OVERLORD logistical estimate that called for an operational pause to build up forces and supplies. It also presupposed that Patton would fulfill his orders to capture

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[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid.

the key Brittany ports of St. Malo, Lorient, and Brest, as well as open Quiberon Bay, the key underpinnings to the OVERLORD campaign agreed to by the Combined Chiefs in 1943. Montgomery's plan called for First Army to shift north, requiring a radical turn by his three northern-most armies with Patton's Third Army continuing on its unopposed rampage to the east.[294]

SHAEF's weekly intellligence estimate noted that the enemy had suffered losses of about 200,000 men, including 80,000 prisoners, with only a 10 percent replacement rate. (See figure 25.) The report further stated that the general withdrawal begun was now confined to the enemy's last route—the Seine river crossings. Elements of seven divisions, all shifted from the Calais area, were identified within the area now being swept by 12th Army Group's turning movement. Stating that the enemy's "battle front has fallen apart," the report noted that drastic measures were being taken by the Germans to control their own lines of communication, including merging unit fragments ("cannibalism") based on panzer elements, with no evidence of any planned defense line being apparent. Estimating that about 20 division equivalents existed for the 30 division headquarters identified, SHAEF stated that about 500,000 men comprised the German force west of the Seine and north of Loire, with about 100,000 of them in the Brittany Peninsula or the Channel Islands. Most significantly, intelligence listed under "Enemy Capabilities" the new propaganda

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[294] Ibid., M.519; Roland Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, 2 Volumes (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953, 1959); 21 Army Group, *Administrative History of 21 Army Group, 6 June 1944-8 May 1945* [hereafter referred to as *21 Army Group Administrative History*] (Germany: 21 Army Group, 1945), passim; Chief of Information, USFET, *American Enterprise in Europe: The Role of the SOS in the Defeat of Germany* [published commercially as Randolph Leigh, *48 Million Tons to Eisenhower* (Washington: Infantry Journal, 1945)].

effort launched within Germany to convince the population that it had its back to the wall, and that superhuman effort would be required to survive.[295]

Despite the drama playing out in the newspapers and the bold arrows moving across France, the enemy was fragmented, not destroyed, and only the continued speed of Allied movement could guarantee keeping the enemy from forming a cohesive defense. Bradley's dream of cutting off the enemy's retreat in front of the British came to fruition; as First Army drove its XIX Corps directly north to reach Elbeuf, and spread the XV Corps north of Paris crossing the Seine at Mantes Gassicourt, V Corps took Paris and VII Corps spread out across the Seine south of the great city. Unlike Patton's manuever, this pursuit by 12 American divisions cut into the remaining meat of the enemy Fifth Panzer Army and compressed the bulk of the remaining enemy in the West northward across the Seine and toward the coast.[296] Patton meanwhile, pressed east to Troyes south of Paris.

21 Army Group's fight, however, moved more slowly, as it reduced "the bottle" while shifting to cross the Seine. Having cancelled airborne operations in the Orleans Gap, Montgomery and SHAEF looked to employ the airborne army, now designated as SHAEF's reserve, in the Pas de Calais area or somewhere to speed the advance up the channel coast to the V-1 and V-2 launching sites. O'Connor's 8 Corps

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[295] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Report No. 22 for week ending 19 August, 2-6; Enemy Order of Battle in West Normandy (map); Enemy Order of Battle in the West (map).

[296] *FUSA Army Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, 30-37.

paid the price of success as its transport was taken to support the move of the Second Army northward.[297]

On 26 August, Montgomery issued his last orders as "ground forces commander." He repeated as his intentions, the tasks he had identified as confronting 21 Army Group:

> To destroy all enemy forces in the PAS DE CALAIS and FLANDERS, and to capture ANTWERP.

His plan beyond the immediate tasks was:

> [t]o advance eastwards on the RUHR.

Montgomery's operational policy stressed the urgency of the situation. He stressed that the requirement for set-piece operations and detailed preparation was over:

> Speed of action and of movement is now vital. I cannot emphasize this too strongly; what we have to do must be done quickly. Every officer and man must understand that by a stupendous effort now we shall not only hasten the end of the war; we shall also bring quick relief to our families and friends in England by over-running the flying bomb launching sites in the PAS DE CALAIS.[298]

Ordering Crerar's Army on to Dieppe and then to Bruges, he also directed a corps' diversion to take Havre with minimal forces, noting that for the Canadians, "the main business lies to the north, and in the PAS DE CALAIS." For this "business," the Airborne Army would be dropped ahead of Crerar's First Army with planning for the operation to take place at Army Group. Monty left no mystery as to

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[297] NARA, RG 407, 21 Army Group, 99/21-26-99/21-150, Box 1817, "21 Army Group WOSTEL No. 12, period up to 2400 hrs. 24 August 1944"; Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic*, 135-139; Chapter 10. A "WOSTEL" was a "War Office, Summary Telegram."

[298] M.520, 26-8-44.

how this was to be done. He designated Crerar's main effort as his right, emphasizing that enemy strength can be dealt with by outflanking operations and "right hooks."[299]

Crerar assessed the position for his two corps commanders, Crocker and Simonds, saying:

> It is clear that the enemy no longer has the troops to hold any stronger position—or to hold any positions for any length of time—if it is aggressively outflanked or attacked. Speed of action and forceful tactics are, therefore, urgently required from commanders at every level in First Cdn Army. We must drive ahead with utmost energy. Any tendency to be slow or "sticky" on the part of subordinate commanders should be quickly and positively eliminated.[300]

Dempsey was ordered to ignore his flanks and to advance to Arras-Amiens-St. Pol, both to continue moving through northeastern France and Belgium and to place forces to support the execution of the airborne operation. As with Crerar, Montgomery issued specific operating instructions for the Army:

> The Army will move with its armoured strength deployed well ahead; its passage northwards must be swift and relentless. By this means it will cut across the communications of the enemy forces in the coastal belt, and will thus facilitate the operations of Canadian Army.[301]

Having been given power to coordinate the left boundary of the 12th Army Group, and given some degree of authority over US First Army's operations, Monty noted that its axis of advance would be Paris-Brussels and would establish itself at Brussels-Maastricht-Liege-Namur-Charleroi.

Montgomery specified tactics for his commanders:

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[299] Ibid.

[300] *Crerar War Diary*, August 1944, Appendix 11, Memo 26 August 1944.

[301] M.520, 26-8-44.

The proper tactics now are for strong armoured and mobile columns to by-pass enemy centres of resistance and to push boldly ahead, creating alarm and despondency in enemy rear areas.

Enemy centres of resistance thus by-passed should be dealt with by infantry columns coming later.

I rely on commanders of every rank and grade to "drive" ahead with the utmost energy; any tendency to be "sticky" or cautious must be stamped on ruthlessly.[302]

The last days of August saw the war of movement bear fruit. By D+79, 24 August, each Allied army had reached its D+90 phase line save those portions of Patton's Army still penned outside the ports. The limits of the lodgement that had been designated by the COSSAC planners had been reached, but the vital Brittany ports needed for the Americans had not been captured.

Eisenhower had announced his intention to assume command of the ground armies beginning 1 September by message on 19 August rather than personally to his senior subordinate commanders. While stressing the options open for the pursuit in several messages, he issued no formal orders until 29 August. On that day, he announced an attack on a broad front using the two army groups then under his command, with priority to the northern thrust which was to be supported by the First Allied Airborne Army.[303]

Montgomery felt that his issuance of M.519 marked the end of the Normandy Campaign; however, it did not mark the end of the OVERLORD plan's requirements, nor did it solve the critical issues of command and strategy. Paris was liberated on 25 August by elements of the Free French 2d Armored Division, and the 4th Infantry

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[302] Ibid.

[303] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2077-2079; 2100-2102.

Division from the US First Army. Montgomery declined Eisenhower's invitation to visit Paris with Bradley; the same day, SHAEF formally informed him that SCAEF would take command of ground forces on 1 September. Montgomery was not the only one who lost forces; Eisenhower's authority over the Allied Strategic bombing force was shortly to be revoked except in times of emergency. SHAEF became a "Supreme" headquarters with limited influence over the Allied air or sea campaign. Its function, had been defined by Eisenhower's directive, which began with the words, "You will enter the continent of Europe." The Allied Expeditionary Forces had accomplished the original OVERLORD task. It was now Eisenhower's and SHAEF's responsibility to complete the victory. SHAEF was now a ground headquarters commanding forces in the field.[304] (See figure 26.)

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[304] *Montgomery Log*, 20, 27 August 1944; NARA, RG 331, 322.01PS to 327.22, Box 47, C.C.S. 304/12, 12 February 1944, "Combined Chiefs of Staff Directive to Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force."

CHAPTER FOUR

Creating The Prince's Greatest Fear

Where is the Prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds, might not, in many places, do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them.

Benjamin Franklin, 1784[305]

The German landing of gliders and reinforcement by parachute forces in complementary operations to seize the Belgian fortress of Eben Emael jolted military observers worldwide into seeing that a new manner of war, "vertical envelopment," could change the face of air-ground battle. OPERATION GRANITE, the actual glider assault, was complemented by additional special operations supporting CASE YELLOW, the mass assault in the west by Hitler's armies. OPERATION NIWI, the landing of small parties of combat engineers in light Storch aircraft to create abatis and other obstacles to French military movement, also took place simultaneously.[306]

The reality of an attack from the air was not new, and had in fact occurred a month before the attack in the west saw its use. The Germans had air-landed troops in Norway in April 1940, during OPERATION WESERBUNG (WESER CROSSING), the attack on Denmark and Norway. Here, airborne and air-landed forces seized key airfields and strategic points to support ship-landed forces.[307]

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[305] Sign kept in the office of the Commanding General, First Allied Airborne Army, 1944.

[306] CMH, MS, Charles Kirkpatrick, ed., *The Attack on Eben Emael*, n.d.; Jean Paul Pallud, *Blitzkrieg in the West: Then and Now* (London: After the Battle, 1991), 78-93; C.S.D.I.G. (U.K.), Genobst Student and Genmaj Bassenge, *History of German Airborne Forces*, 24 September 1945.

[307] T.K. Derry, *The Campaign in Norway* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1995); The Admiralty, Tactical and Staff Duties Division, *The German Campaign In Norway, 1948*; Headquarters, Northern Army Group and Second Allied Tactical Air Force Study Period, 1974, "Norway," parts one and two.

Neither operation was based on a new idea. Parachuting troops or the transport of troops by air-landing aircraft had been theorized in World War I by American Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell and had been practiced on a limited scale within the US Army Air Corps by luminaries such as then-Captain Claire L. Chennault. Russia introduced airborne forces in a mass exercise in 1936 attended by Major-General Archibald Wavell, who reported on it, and Germany unveiled an airborne force in 1937. The shock of its use, however, caused immediate response in both the combatant armies and those armies not yet engaged.[308]

Britain's response was to form an "Airborne Corps" in June 1940, under Brigadier F.A.M. Browning, a Grenadier Guardsman who had participated as a commanding officer in Eastern Command's anti-airborne exercises in the late 1930s.[309]

The experience of war shaped the ardor and azimuth of the airborne forces. The successful operation by German airborne and air-landed forces in the invasion of Crete halted further major German airborne operations due to the Germans' own risk-assessment for probable future losses, though several minor operations were launched later in the war. Additionally, German airborne troops became more a "fire-brigade"

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[308] Arnold, *Global Mission*, 84; Claire Lee Chennault, *Way of A Fighter: The Memoirs of Claire Lee Chennault*, ed. Robert Hotz (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), 16, 17; John Connell, *Wavell: Soldier and Scholar* (London: Collins, 1964), 182-183.

[309] Lieut.-Col. T.B. Otway, DSO, *Airborne Forces: The Second World War 1939-1945 Series* (The War Office, London: Imperial War Museum, 1990), 21-36.

of elite troops used to hold key areas of the front or to act as normal infantry. The Allied experience, however, led to far different conclusions.[310]

Allied airborne operations reflected a changing doctrine plus operational realities. Browning's original charter, under the supervision of Combined Operations Headquarters, led him toward precision strikes in the form of raids or the seizure of key tactical points by small bodies of men. Staunch opposition from Bomber Command, fearing the dispersion of multi-engined bombers for conversion into troop carriers or as glider-tows, also stymied both training and the creation of large formations. Moreover, the creation of glider-borne forces from the redesignation of formed regiments as glider troops was opposed by the Royal Air Force due to the requirements of pilot training and towing that would fall to the airmen as part of this scheme. Browning's ideas, however, shaped the British airborne forces and, as a result, were a driving factor in the employment of British airborne forces throughout the war.[311]

As an evolutionary force, the airborne concept was driven by the personalities of the commanders as well as operational requirements and achievements. Browning's dominant ideas were that airborne forces should be employed as divisions and that the overarching planning, organizational and administrative duties required to maintain the force should be centered higher, on Airborne Corps and on Headquarters, Airborne Forces, and not on individual division commanders. Browning achieved these goals

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[310] *Airborne Operations: A German Appraisal* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1989), 1-23. The original author and editors were German generals under the supervision of General Franz Halder. The principal author of this study was Generalmajor Hellmuth Reinhardt.

[311] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, ibid.; Major Victor Dover, *The Sky Generals* (London: Cassell, 1981), Chapter IV, passim.

during 1941–1944. Operationally, Browning's force evolved from the raid stage (Bruneval, February 1942) to the use of dispersed battalions (Tunisia, 1942) and to the use of large brigade-sized forces (Sicily, July 1943). In each case, Browning had been relegated to "adviser" status, and the operational concepts came from Army level or Combined Operations' planners. The concerted use of a complete airborne division as part of a larger operational plan would not come until the invasion of Northwest Europe—the Normandy invasion. The lack of airlift had hampered the operational employment of the British airborne forces in the past and would become the key consideration in their use.[312]

The American experience with airborne forces showed some parallels both in its evolution and in the politics of the support for such forces within the overarching command structures, Headquarters, US Army Ground Forces, and Headquarters, US Army Air Forces. As with the British experience, airborne development was greatly personality-driven, and its oversight was given to senior ground officers who by assignment or personal belief became airborne advocates. Starting from an experimental platoon in 1940, by 1943 the force included an "Airborne Command," four divisions, and several separate regiments or battalions. As with the British, it was used in battalion operations (Tunisia, 1942), regimental operations (Sicily), and Division-minus operations (Italy, 1943). *Its* large-scale debut would also be the Normandy invasion. Unlike the British force, it had several "fathers" both organizationally and operationally, but their purpose had always been to create divisions as the Germans had done. Organizationally, the American airborne forces

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[312] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, chapters 3-11, passim.

differed significantly from the British, and unlike the Royal Air Force, the commander of the AAF believed it to be an "air weapon" of great potential and dedicated significant air assets for its support while simultaneously demanding a say in their use.[313]

As with the entire 1944 campaign, the Mediterranean Allied experience and the COSSAC planners found their mark in shaping attitudes and plans for the use of airborne. From the start, airborne planning produced a battle over command, assets, forces, and tactical missions. COSSAC's planners had specified tasks for the airborne, and detailed drop-zone information was included as part of the planners' working papers.[314] 21 Army Group's assumption of the planning responsibilities modified these greatly, but battles fanned by personalities erupted. The Americans, particularly Major General Matthew B. Ridgway, took issue and offense at any higher-imposed plan and particularly harbored resentment over Browning's 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters, a resentment fueled by his belief that it existed solely "to take over the entire American airborne effort."[315]

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[313] James A. Huston, *Out of the Blue: US Army Airborne Operations in World War II* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Studies, 1972), Chapters 2-6, passim; CMH,MS, Major John Huston, *Airborne Forces* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), Chapters 1-5, passim; Clay Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers: The American Airborne In World War II* (Garden City, N.Y.: The Dial Press, 1985); Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington: Historical Division, US Army, 1947), 93-98, 339-350. *Out of the Blue* is the edited version of the otherwise unpublished US Army in World War II official history volume that was dropped from publication due to funding. Huston was its sole author.

[314] See COSSAC Plan 87-91, Appendix "O"; Major General James M. Gavin, *Airborne Warfare* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), 37-41.

[315] Interview, Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1984 by author; General Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* as told to Harold H. Martin (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1956, 1974), 66-67. Ridgway referred to Browning as his "sparring partner."

Montgomery's battle with Leigh Mallory over airborne missions, both during NEPTUNE's planning and early in the invasion, also exposed grave philosophical or doctrinal differences that festered along with personality issues. These attitudes continued throughout the campaign.[316]

Both the American Army and the British forces possessed printed doctrine establishing basic views and organizational tenets for the use of airborne forces, and SHAEF had produced a detailed Operational Memorandum outlining the stated requirements for operational planning of such operations.[317] Tactical usage and operational missions, however, remained the responsibility of the employing commanders, and the definition of those missions, and the views of those commanders, shaped the detail of tactics and procedures prior to deployment. The nature of the airborne mission itself posed complicated problems whose solution was sought by creating a series of headquarters to plan, coordinate, and eventually command airborne operations.

Central to the issue of airborne employment was also the one of troop lift and glider-tows. The AAF had addressed this problem with a large troop-carrier effort centralized in Europe under IX Troop Carrier Command, a component of the 9th Air Force that provided tactical air support for Bradley's 12th Army Group. British transport aircraft were not centralized formally, but were provided by the RAF's No. 38 and No. 46 Groups. While Browning had previously sought to centralize airborne

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[316] Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 186; EL, Correspondence File [Leigh Mallory], AEAF/TS/836/Ops.3, 29th May 1944, Employment of Airborne Forces in Operation "OVERLORD."

[317] NARA, RG 331, SHAEF G-3 Administrative Subject File, "Operational Memoranda," Operation Memorandum Number 12, 13th March 1944, Standard Operating Procedure for Airborne and Troop Carrier Units; Otway, *Airborne Forces*, Appendix F.

forces and to provide an overarching tactical headquarters, SHAEF, encouraged by Washington's views on airborne, sought to unify the airborne forces and troop carriers under theater control.[318]

Washington's airborne views percolated throughout 1943 and 1944, leading to increased support by both Marshall and Arnold. Arnold believed that the use of airborne troops had been discovered as a sound theory by General "Billy" Mitchell and heartily approved their use in Sicily. Later, he supported the creation of the 1st Air Commando Group to support Major-General Orde C. Wingate's operations and the aerial invasion of Burma that took place in March 1944. [319]

The Chief of Staff of the Army and the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, however, held stronger views on airborne employment. Arnold's staff, believing that airborne forces should seize "strategic objectives," proposed a 5–6 division air drop near Paris as a component of OVERLORD. Eisenhower's refusal to accept this proposed "airhead" as a prelude to an air-delivered army and a mooring point for French resistance fighters raised the ire of both generals. Arnold accused Eisenhower of thinking tactically. Eisenhower believed that the relative ground immobility of the airborne divisions would prove their doom if a rapid link with ground forces wasn't established. Marshall, eventually straddling both viewpoints, withdrew from his early disappointment but urged Eisenhower to seek bolder employment of the airborne force after OVERLORD.[320]

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[318] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, Chapters V, VI; Huston, *Out of the Blue*, 57-64.

[319] Arnold, *Global Mission*, 398, 442.

[320] Arnold, *Global Mission*, 520-522; *Marshall Papers, IV*, 284, 285; Bland, *Reminiscences for Pogue*, 465-466; *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1736-1739.

The SHAEF staff's own conclusions paralleled Washington's in one sense: they proposed that all airborne operations be centralized under SHAEF. On 20 May 1944, the G-3 recommended creating a headquarters on the level of Army Group to unify control of all airborne forces while the AEAF remained the overseer of Troop Carrier forces. The Airborne Subsection of G-3 would form the nucleus of this new headquarters. The plan received mixed support.[321]

21 Army Group recommended that such an organization could work, but that any changes should be implemented when the Supreme Commander assumed control of ground forces in NEPTUNE. 12th Army Group objected to SHAEF's scheme, recommending that a separate American airborne command be formed. Not only were doctrine, equipment, and staff requirements different, they held, 12th Army Group noted that carrying all the American forces available would require the entire theater's troop carrier assets. No "combined" command was wanted. SHAEF's control of airborne forces through the respective army groups was their answer.[322] Their underlying logic was clear. Bradley intended assuring that American divisions could never be part of an Allied operation supporting 21 Army Group. The British would have their own force. This logic would persist.[323]

Eisenhower's "conversion" to mass vertical envelopments had been assured by Marshall's interest in airborne operations. Before leaving the Mediterranean, he had

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[321] Huston, *Out of the Blue*, 76.

[322] Ibid., 77.

[323] NARA, RG 331, SGS Decimal File, 322 1st AAA, entry 1, Box 38, SHAEF/17281/Ops/Ops (A), Subject: Airborne Forces, 30 July 1944; Ninth Air Force, Subject: Organization and Contemplated Operations of Air Army, 28 July 1944; Hqs AEAF, Organization of Combined US/British Airborne Troop Headquarters, 17 July; *Bull Papers*; Bull informed Bradley that Ridgway's intent to form an airborne section at 12th Army Group would probably fail.

written to the Chief of Staff saying, "I do not believe in the airborne division." Now, after his disagreement with Marshall and Arnold, he moved to use them en masse without the bickering that had characterized the NEPTUNE planning. While his staff designed tighter controls for an airborne command, he wrote Marshall that he was attempting to visualize an attack behind OVERLORD's beaches combining "a big armored attack in conjunction with a deep and heavy penetration by airborne troops."[324]

Eisenhower's own ideas exceeded his staff's recommendations and reflected more Arnold's philosophy than those of his commanders. This would become more apparent as directives for planning were issued and missions were sought for the airborne command, but other factors may have spurred the Supreme Commander to action. Eisenhower's own role as the future ground commander needed definition, not simply as a writer of directives for individual army group commanders, but as a commander who affects the battlefield situation and intervenes to seize opportunity or prevent disaster. This had been the argument for his total control of theater air assets. Once established as ground supremo, he would need a strategic reserve to be committed on his order in concert with any army group maneuver that he directed. A separate headquarters under the operational control of SHAEF was essential to keep these reins in his hands. Implicit in its use was that the reserve force could be readily

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[324] *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1736-1739, 1878; Eisenhower's conversion obviously came from Marshall's discussions with him in Algiers. The verbal tussle over the rejected plans likewise solidified Marshall's interest in Eisenhower's mind.

moved to any front, irrespective of national sector. An airborne force was the only command that fit this bill.[325]

Eisenhower proposed that the organization combine command of both the troop carriers and the ground forces to optimize training and planning. For battle, a corps commander would command on the ground until his force linked with a ground army that would provide overall command and administration. Until then, the air commander would provide logistical support. The proposal was approved by Marshall, Arnold, and Spaatz, but Leigh Mallory questioned AEAF's role if such a headquarters were established. Moreover, Leigh Mallory reminded Eisenhower that the air transport groups of the RAF would have to be assigned for missions by the Air Ministry, as they were neither organic elements of 2 TAF or AEAF nor assigned for operations to SHAEF.[326]

Eisenhower increasingly saw the airborne force and its use as a struggle against the weather clock. He noted in a memo to Smith on 23 June 1944:

> By September 20, at the latest, we can count upon the beginning of winter weather. After that date air operations will be spasmodic.

His concerns reveal both his operational ideas and his problems:

> The air represents the one important factor in which we enjoy tremendous superiority. As a consequence of these facts we should

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[325] NARA, SHAEF SGS 381 Post-Overlord, Volume 1, SHAEF/18008/3Ops, 11 May 1944; Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 269. SHAEF's plans staff, produced an outline plan in May to commit the strategic reserve on/about D+20 under certain conditions. The plan entailed using airborne forces to "to seize an area in the centre of PARIS by air transported forces, from which we should deny the enemy crossings over the SEINE, divert his reserves from the main battle and generally disrupt his communications and control. The force envisaged for the task was four divisions . . . minus artillery, transportation and impedimenta."

[326] *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1988-1989; Huston, *Out of the Blue*, 77-79; Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 202; NARA, 322 1st AAA file.

strive in every possible way to make maximum use of our air during the next 60-90 days. This includes every type of air operation, such as:

a. Normal close support of ground forces;

b. Smashing of communication lines;

c. Neutralizing of CROSSBOW;

d. Airborne operations;

e. Supply of troops by air.

He summarized his view on the air campaign, saying,

> The direct attack against Germany is of second priority as compared to the necessity of getting all the above tasks in hand, but in any event, there will unquestionably be sufficient days when other types of operations are impracticable, to continue the striking assault upon Germany, and there will be days during the winter when this can likewise be carried out.

He continued, saying,

> The one place in which we must make sure there is continuous and energetic staff planning is in the airborne operations. This should not be limited to Airborne Divisions but should be extended, where practicable, to include the transportation and temporary supply of normal Divisions by air.[327]

Besides setting the tone for "his" campaign once he replaced Montgomery, Eisenhower began fishing for an airman as the most likely commander; he suggested Major General John Kenneth Cannon, then the Commanding General of the Twelfth Air Force in Italy.[328] This search for an airman, once joined, was debated by the senior airmen in Washington and in Europe. Eisenhower finally recommended four candidates, with Major General Hoyt S. Vandenburg, Leigh Mallory's deputy, at the top of the list. The job fell to Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton, then

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[327] NARA RG 338 SHAEF Office of Chief of Staff Decimal File May 43-Aug 45, Box 65, entry 1, Post-Overlord Planning, Memorandum for Chief of Staff; *Eisenhower Papers, III*, 1946-1948.

[328] Ibid.

commanding Ninth Air Force, on Spaatz's recommendation but possibly on Arnold's insistence.[329]

Eisenhower named Brereton as Commander, Combined Airborne Forces on 27 July 1944, and simultaneously created the US XVIII Corps (Airborne) under Major General Matthew B. Ridgway.[330] The precise function and authority of Combined Airborne Forces, however, was still a matter of discussion, a discussion that had started in May and theoretically had been decided on 20 June, when Eisenhower approved the basic command concept. Brereton's directive, dated 8 August 1944, gave him wide administrative and training responsibilities over the airborne force, to include overseeing their reconstitution after battle. Brereton's primary operational responsibilities were defined in paragraph 1.(g.) of his directive:

> The preparation and examination in conjunction with the SHAEF Planning Staff of the outline plan for the employment of Airborne Troops and preparation of detailed plans for the employment of Airborne Troops in conjunction with the Ground Force and Air Force Commanders.

Brereton asked that his headquarters be designated as the First Allied Airborne Army (FAAA), stating that the assignment of British, US, and Polish forces, would merit such a name to further "the esprit de corps of the units." Eisenhower accepted this as, well as clarifying AEAF's role and that of the troop carriers. On 16 August,

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[329] LC, *Papers of General Carl A. Spaatz* [hereafter referred to as *Spaatz Papers*], Personal File, 1944-1945. Following a series of teletype conferences and messages, Eisenhower named Brereton based upon Spaatz's recommendation. Vandenberg replaced Brereton at Ninth Air Force. Teletype messages in *Spaatz Papers*. Cannon and Vandenberg were both considered too junior to command, as a lieutenant general of some experience would be needed over Browning, who would serve as a Corps Commander. In the event, Brereton actually was "junior" to Browning in time in grade.

[330] NARA, RG 331 entry 253, Box 4, First Allied Airborne 322, Reorganization and organization, SHAEF/322-3/O&E, 27 July 1944; RG 331, Entry 253, Box 38, 322 1st AAA, Organization and Command First Allied Airborne Army. FAAA Headquarters was announced 18 August 1944.

First Allied Airborne Army was created from the nascent Combined Airborne Forces, with the formal assignment of operational command of British Airborne Troops, XVIII Corps (Airborne), IX Troop Carrier Command, and the Combined Air Transport Operations Room (CATOR). Since CATOR controlled 38 and 46 Groups, RAF, their operational assignments were assured. Lt. Gen. F.A.M. Browning was named as Deputy Commanding General while also retaining command of I Airborne Corps.[331]

Brereton had, in fact, influenced more than simply the renaming of the force and was not simply a creative operator expressing his own ideas. Washington had planted firm seeds, and they were about to bear fruit. Brereton and Spaatz met with Eisenhower at Brereton's headquarters on 17 July, and the topic of airborne forces was discussed in detail. Brereton, not knowing his own command might change, followed up the meeting with a memorandum outlining his views. He strongly recommended that all US airborne divisions be put under Ninth Air Force. As he saw it, the air commander would not only ensure transport and training for the airborne, but would personally direct air support operations while the ground commander fought the ground battle. He noted that command in an airborne operation "must be vested in a single commander . . . a necessity to coordinate air drops, aerial protection for transports, and air support." This would, in effect, create a single fighting air-ground command. Moreover, under this system, AEAF would be relegated to

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Combined Airborne Headquarters had opened on 2 August. Ridgway formally assumed command on 27 August 1944.

[331] RG 331, Box 38, 322 1st AAA File: Headquarters, Combined Airborne Forces, subject: Designation of Combined Airborne Forces, 4 August 1944; SHAEF /17281/Ops (A) Redesignation of Airborne Forces, 9 August 1944; SHAEF AG 322-1 (First Allied Airborne Army) GCT-AM,

coordination, but actual command would stay within US channels from SHAEF (Eisenhower) to USSTAF (Spaatz) to Ninth Air Force (Brereton).

> This contradicted Leigh Mallory's view that AEAF should
>
> remain responsible for all air aspects of airborne operations, while the Airborne Commander would control all ground operations.

Moreover, as Leigh Mallory defined airborne operations, he saw that,

> From time of take-off to landing, an airborne operation being a purely air operation-must be the responsibility of the Air C.-in-C., who must retain the power of veto.

Eisenhower rejected Brereton's views and assured Leigh Mallory that

> the air movement plan is an indivisible air operation and, of necessity, will be prepared by the Air Commander-in-Chief and the Airborne Commander.

His final statement would prove ironic:

> Your responsibility for air support, subject to the decision of the Supreme Commander, is of course, unquestioned.

Smith later confirmed in writing the state of responsibility, that

> the Commanding General, First Allied Airborne Army will control the air lift of the First Allied Airborne Army and that the responsibility for supporting air operations rests with the Air Commander-in-Chief.[332]

Assignment of Units, 16 August 1944; SHAEF/17281/1/Ops (A), Reorganization of Airborne Forces, 19 August 1944.

[332] Ibid., 322 1st AAA file: Memorandum Subject: Organization and Contemplated Operations of an Air Army, 28 July 1944; Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Air Force, Subject: ORGANIZATION OF A COMBINED US/BRITISH AIRBORNE TROOP HEADQUARTERS, 17th July 1944; SHAEF/17281/Ops (A) 31 July 1944, Subject: Organization of a Combined US/British Airborne Troop Headquarters; SHAEF/17281/Ops(A), 1 August, Subject: Organization of a Combined US/BRITISH Airborne Troops Headquarters; SHAEF/17281/1/Ops(A), 19 August 1944, Subject: Reorganization of Airborne Forces.

The same day Brereton's orders were published, Eisenhower showed his impatience with the job at hand. He sent this memo to his chief of staff, who passed it on to the new commander:

> Brereton should be working on his new job instantly. Please inform him that I am particularly anxious about the navigational qualifications of the Transport Command crews. He is to get on this in an intensive way. He is to keep me in touch with his progress. There is nothing we are undertaking about which I am more concerned than this job of his. I want him on the ball with all his might.[333]

Washington's views, however, would never be far from Eisenhower's mind. Obviously, his March tussle with Arnold remained a concern. Arnold's views, essentially rubber-stamped by Marshall, could not be ignored either by the Supreme Commander or by Arnold's own man, Brereton. These views, simply stated, were that an air army should be flown into an airhead. Arnold, in fact, shared these views throughout the Army Air Forces. Seeking to influence the airborne operations in support of ANVIL, Arnold both recommended and reviewed plans. Writing to the Mediterranean Deputy Allied Supreme Commander, Lieutenant General Jacob L. (Jake) Devers, he stated,

> I believe that the employment of airborne forces in mass has tremendous potentialities which we have not yet exploited. As long as we have the general initiative and can control the air, we should bear in mind the potential value of those forces as a means of avoiding or breaking stalemate periods as well as a means of spearheading main ground efforts.
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> Sooner or later the opportunity of mounting a well-planned mass airborne operation will be exploited and we are looking forward to giving it our maximum support.[334]

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[333] Ibid., Memorandum to Chief of Staff, 2 August 1944, "DE."

[334] RG 18, entry 294, decimal 312.1-k, Operations letters, Ltr Arnold to Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers, 26 July 1944.

Eisenhower, who was not an addressee of this correspondence, did, however, receive all key summaries and cables going to the Mediterranean, including those recommending airborne support for the invasion by Arnold and his staff. With this as part of his daily Cable Log at SHAEF, the War Department, in keeping Eisenhower informed, was also reminding him of their views concerning airborne operations. Moreover, Spaatz, who was kept informed of everything by Arnold, apprised Eisenhower of the Commanding General, Army Air Forces' views on this issue.[335]

Devers, as the former European Theater of Operations (ETO) commander, and now the Allied Deputy Supreme Commander Mediterraenan Theater, was seen as a great friend of airpower, having been responsible for supporting the American air buildup in England in 1943. His air commander, Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker, had written Arnold, furthering the discussion begun by Arnold on the topic of an air army, a topic which he had Spaatz and others looking into. Eaker had recommended Cannon as commander, but waxed further on the subject seeing it as the solution for ground operations. He stated:

> If we had an airborne army headed by a bold, energetic Jeb Stewart [sic] type of a fellow, I think he might shorten this war in Europe by almost a year. In short, you will see that I am for your airborne army every way from Sunday. It is the boldest, most forward looking concept which I have seen yet in this war. I think it might be a critical operation against a bold, versatile army, flushed with success and supported by a strong air force. If an airborne army captured a group of airfields and we set our tactical air forces down on them we could absolutely prevent enemy tanks from disturbing the airborne force and could also prevent enemy artillery close enough to do it any damage.

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[335] Ibid.

The "Jeb Stuart" Eaker had in mind was Jake Devers. Devers, who would lead the invasion of Southern France, by then was considered persona non grata by Eisenhower and, of course, did not fit Eisenhower's belief that an airman needed to command Combined Airborne Forces in order to assure the air forces' cooperation.[336]

The "approved" Army Air Force doctrine appeared to follow the pattern that Wingate had set in Burma, an experiment that Arnold had furthered and which he believed to be universally applicable. Eisenhower both understood this idea and was apparently moving not only to centralize the airborne planning and execution process, but also to further the "air-landed" division as part of future operations. In July, he had requested that the War Department give three weeks' training to every other infantry division ticketed for the European Theater in the use of the C-47 transport aircraft and gliders as means of transportation.[337]

Creating the headquarters, however, did not solve arguments over actual use of the force. SHAEF's planners had categorized operations into two types:

> *An airborne operation proper*, in which up to the three airborne divisions are landed by parachute and glider and maintained by parachute and glider. For such an operation the capture of an airfield or construction of an air strip is not essential.
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> *An airhead* in which the airborne forces seize an existing airfield or construct strips on which air landed formations can be put down and on which maintenance stores can be landed.[338]

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[336] Ibid., Ltr. Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker to Arnold, 14 July 1944.

[337] RG 331, 322 1st AAA files: msgs. E-3646, Eisenhower to AGWAR, 5 July 44 and E-37012, 9 July 1944; PRO WO /203/ 5213, Forces of Long Range Penetration: Future Development in Burma. Memorandum by Brigadier Wingate offers a comparison with Wingate's views.

[338] NARA, RG 331,SHAEF SGS, 2, Employment of Airborne Forces in Overlord, PS-SHAEF (44) 30 (Final) Memorandum by Planning Staff, 18 August 1944. See Draft, 14 August, for a detailed appreciation titled "Airheads." This appreciation forms the basic planning estimate for possible operations delineating forces, capabilities, time estimates on availability of aircraft, aircraft limitations, and outlines of basic data on airfield and terrain capabilities within range of FAAA's aircraft. This

The Eisenhower-Arnold "airhead" strategy was but one possibility for its employment. Both types of operations had restrictions. The airborne, it was felt, could defend itself for only several days, after which the armor threat would be too great; the airhead, which claimed the possibility of supporting up to six divisions, was at the mercy of weather, terrain and, of course, the enemy, so it too had to be reachable by a relieving force. The Army's deputy commander and the American commander of the XVIII Corps (Airborne) would be the prime interpreters of whether any airborne operation was a "sound operation of war."

Their respective armies had published airborne doctrine of a remarkably similar nature. Indeed, the prime missions and uses for the airborne force seemed nearly identical. The tactics of employment, however, varied; this was reflected by the organizations and equipment of the American and British Airborne divisions. The planning for airborne missions had already by standardized by SHAEF in March, during the planning for OVERLORD. This was to be the planning model for use by First Allied Airborne Army, but no standard doctrine for airborne tactics had been attempted. [339]

Both Browning and Ridgway had battled to get airborne forces viewed as a strategic weapon used en masse, but Ridgway, particularly, viewed any strategic use

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study was not published as part of the final memorandum. Earlier drafts, dated 4 August and 28 July, contain additional detail. All drafts are in the same file.

[339] Ibid.; United States War Department Training Circular, 113, 9 October 1943, *Employment and Training of Airborne and Troop Carrier Forces*; British War Office, May 1943, *Airborne Operations Pamphlet No. 1 General (Provisional)*; SHAEF Operational Memorandum No. 12, 13th March 1944; NAC, RG 24, Volume 20420, File 969(D20), SHAEF/2297/4/Ops, Employment of Airborne Forces, 19 January 1944.

of his corps by Montgomery's 21 Army Group as anathema.[340] SHAEF's planning section, however, had an active file of outline plans, and Brereton's mission was to "get on the ball with all his might." Considering Eisenhower's fever to use airborne, one of these existent plans seemed most likely to be executed.

The lack of an airborne headquarters had not stopped operational airborne planning since the creation of COSSAC. SHAEF's airborne subsection of the plans staff and Montgomery's own 21 Army Group planners had devised a series of outline plans as contingencies for NEPTUNE. These were extant in July when Brereton entered the picture, and the ongoing planning demonstrated clearly the state of thinking in the airborne arena. Browning's 1 Airborne Corps had been the primary "filter" for airborne plans conceived at SHAEF, or at 21 Army Group. Only one airborne division existed as the available airborne force until the withdrawal of the US airborne divisions from Normandy in July. This division, British 1st Airborne, was the main force for any of the contingency plans created.

During THUNDERCLAP, Monty had referred to using "air hooks" of brigade or division strength to keep the situation proceeding according to plan. (See figure 27.) Some of these detailed plans were initiated as early as May and included operations to reinforce the beachhead (TUXEDO and WASTAGE), to pull forward the beachhead (WILD OATS), to seize ports in the Brittany Peninsula or to cut them off (BENEFICIARY, SWORDHILT, and HANDSUP), to block the enemy's line of retreat (TRANSFIGURE), or to support the movement on the north coast by seizing

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[340] MHI, Papers of Lt. Gen. Floyd L. Parks, *The Parks Diary, August-September 1944* [hereafter referred to as *Parks Diary*] passim. Parks was Chief of Staff, First Allied Airborne Army. His diary

key areas or ports (BOXER, AXEHEAD, and LINNET). Additionally, dropping airborne troops in conjunction with operations on the Caen-Falaise road was examined twice. These were essentially Montgomery's plans and, due to the available forces, almost all British affairs.[341] Additionally, 21 Army Group coordinated SAS operations, which Bradley, Parks, and Brereton disparaged as "harassing operations" unworthy of the Allied Airborne Army. These operations remained under Headquarters, Airborne Forces, but were orchestrated by SHAEF.[342] No similar special operations capability then existed in the American forces, though the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) Jedburgh teams did have the ability to coordinate resistance groups. They were not, however, a functioning part of FAAA.[343]

During the interim period, as organizational problems were being solved in order to create a combined airborne command, SHAEF's planners considered 21 Army Group's planning with 1 Airborne Corps as their airborne program. This program covered broad areas already in planning for possible implementation. In outlining them for the long-suffering Leigh Mallory, who wanted clarification, these covered three eventualities: a seizure of a port in Brittany; a drop in conjunction with an armored thrust toward Paris from the lodgement area; and two separate plans for operations to support crossing the Seine either north or south of Paris. SHAEF

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constitutes the best operational record of the headquarters and its thinking. Relevant conference notes and memos are appended to the diary entries.

[341] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 206-212; MHI, *Papers of Lt. Col. Chester B. Hansen*, Op Thunderclap; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10539, File 215A21.013 (D17), 21 A.Gp/00/450/Ops (A): Overlord: Operation Hands-Up is an example of a completed outline plan.

[342] *Parks Diary*, 11 August 1944; Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: The War in the Air in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe, 3 October 1941-8 May 1945* [hereafter referred to as *Brereton Diaries*] (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1946), 333.

[343] S.J. Lewis, *Jedburgh Teams in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1991).

believed the possibilities for the first would be in August, for the second from mid-August to mid-September and crossings in the north possible in September, and in the south in October. When published in mid-July, this estimate still followed the assessment that the lodgement would be established by September despite the lag in the early phase-line arrivals.[344]

The rapidly evolving situation in early August and the creation of First Allied Airborne Army did little to spur new planning. Brereton's headquarters shifted for jobs, but the "trigger" for launching airborne operations remained with Montgomery and his increasingly unwilling subordinate, Bradley, and no serious plans were advanced beyond those already on the boards. Moreover, in Eisenhower's mind, he remained the sole arbiter of the fate of any airborne plan.[345]

Mid-August, and the impending doom of the German forces within the "NEPTUNE" area, prompted new efforts to seek the "mass envelopment" promised by Eisenhower to Arnold and Marshall. SHAEF issued two planning directives to FAAA, the first on 16 August, with a categorization of priorities following on 18 August 1944. Brereton's small staff, and their counterparts at 1 Airborne Corps and the still organizing XVIII Corps (Airborne), soon tumbled to create plans following six contingencies. As stated, these were:

> Priority I—Operation NORTH of the Lower Seine between the OISE and Rouen to facilitate the crossing of our advance forces.

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[344] NARA, RG 331, entry 1, Box 65, Folder 373/2 volume 1 Employment of Airborne Forces in Operation Overlord, 27 July 43 thru 24 December 45, SHAEF/24500/00/3/Ops, 14 July 1944, "Future Airborne Operations In Furtherance of 'Overlord'."

[345] *Parks Diary*, 15 August 1944. This had been SHAEF's view since the beginning of the NEPTUNE planning.

Priority II—Operation to seize the crossings over the Oise between the Seine and Compiegne, to protect the right flank of our advancing forces.

Priority III—Operation NORTH of the Upper Seine between FONTAINEBLEAU and JUVISY to facilitate the crossing of our advancing forces.

Priority IV—Operation NORTH of the River SOMME between PERONNE and ABBEVILLE to facilitate the crossing of our advancing forces.

Priority V—Operation NORTH of the River AISNE in the neighbourhood of SOISSONS to facilitate the crossing of our forces advancing from the SOUTH.

In conjunction with Allied Expeditionary Air Force and 21st Army Group:

Priority VI—Operation to seize the ST OMER area with the view to hindering the withdrawal of enemy coastal forces from the PAS DE CALAIS coast.

SHAEF stipulated that planning these operations would be completed by 25 August except for operations north of the Seine, which had a target date of 7 September or later.[346] Existing operations TRANSFIGURE, BOXER, AXEHEAD, and LINNET actually fulfilled several of the priorities, but SHAEF, or 21 Army Group, still failed to fulfill the dream of "a strategic" operation with all but a few of these plans. Only TRANSFIGURE and BOXER offered strategic results, and these only if a massive catch of enemy forces were made or if a deep-water port were captured along with maintaining a rapid pursuit. While planning for these operations was prudent, the reality of using the Airborne Army as anything more than a tactical or operational adjunct to the then rapidly unfolding operational situation was meeting the problem of diminishing returns.

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[346] RG 331, ibid., Airborne operations to assist crossings of the SEINE-Directive, 16 August 1944; APPENDIX 'A' to PS-SHAEF (44) 30 Final dated 18 August 1944, SUBJECT: Airborne Operations To Assist Our Overland Advance-Directive.

Arnold's dream and Eisenhower's enthusiasm to fulfill it also met with internal problems—the same problems that had plagued the coalition since its inception. Nationalism, service prejudices, and the personality problems enhanced by the uncontrolled enthusiasms of the national press made a concerted effort to support and utilize the Airborne Army as it was intended very difficult. Remarkably, considering Arnold's views, the problems were American-inspired.

Browning continued to respond to 21 Army Group, following the established pattern—with outline plans to fit Monty's long-term ideas and with detailed planning and coordination with ground army commanders on order—as specific contingencies appeared to be possible. But apart from Brereton and his staff, the Americans dragged their feet. Beginning in July, Major General Maxwell Taylor, the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, answered SHAEF's query concerning the mounting time for an airborne operation. If accepted, his estimate of thirty days would have thrown planners into a frenzy as they realized that "opportunities" must be seen a full month or more out in order to capitalize on the Airborne Army's capabilities. SHAEF's August directives proved it believed the opposite to be true. In the Mediterranean Theater, airborne missions had been conceived on a short timescale, and no one seriously questioned or studied the results of such an assumption.[347]

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[347] USAF Historical Division, *Airborne Missions in the Mediterranean 1942-1945*: USAF Historical Studies: No. 74 [hereafter referred to as *Airborne Misions in the Med*] (Research Studies Institute, Air University, 1955), passim; MHI, *Papers of General Matthew B. Ridgway*, Personal File, Correspondence, "Lessons of Airborne Operations in Italy, 25 October 1943." Ridgway urged that the airborne division be used only as "a division" and cited problems of piecemeal commitment of forces in the Mediterranean. While Ridgway made extensive comments on the use of airborne divisions, his main points included that the airborne commander should participate in planning, but the timescale for preparation was never discussed.

Moreover, Bradley saw airborne operations as both limited and, as August progressed, a threat to his air-supplied fuel stores that were being carried by IX Troop Carrier Command under the aegis of CATOR. He particularly saw any commitment to support 21 Army Group's operations as nonbeneficial to his own.[348]

Most importantly, FAAA found itself supporting two opposing cliques. Montgomery saw utility in the airborne, and had consistently kept his planner, Brigadier Charles Richardson, and Browning's planners in constant contact both furthering the outline plans on the planners' boards and exploring possible plans for the unfolding campaign. Throughout, Monty considered Browning to be "his" airborne commander. Likewise, the anglophobic Ridgway, who had stumped to create an American airborne corps under his own command, became Bradley's self-designated "airborne commander" to prevent FAAA from supporting 21Army Group. FAAA's staff soon became segmented supporting these opposing interests, and this state of affairs continued well into the second month of FAAA's existence. First Allied Airborne Army was dominated by Americans, and the Deputy, Browning, was very much the odd man out. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that tactical planning for the ground operations was conducted in Browning's I Airborne Corps headquarters, whereas the "air plan," and essentially the outline concepts for operations, were produced at Brereton's headquarters by his American G-3.[349]

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[348] Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 401, 402; the *Bradley Commentaries* noted his preference of aerial resupply and the problem of coordinating an airborne operation with an ongoing ground offensive.

[349] *Parks Diary*, August-September, passim. The daily situation as it unfolds for a series of four plans, TRANSFIGURE, LINNET, LINNET II, and COMET, as one where the Americans continue to look for a way to support 12th Army Group in lieu of their designated mission of supporting 21 Army Group.

Further complicating matters was the state of First Allied Airborne Army's headquarters as it evolved. One day after his assumption of command, Brereton, who still temporarily commanded the Ninth Air Force, "occupied" his former headquarters as the future home of the Combined Airborne Forces. Ninth Air Force, awaiting the arrival of Hoyt Vandenburg, was in the midst of moving its main elements to France. Assured facilities, and most important, good communications by remaining in his previous headquarters, Brereton met with four American brigadier generals and set the "tone" for FAAA. One—his current Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Vincent Strahm—would soon depart. The other three provided the senior staff of his airborne command. Brigadier General Floyd L. Parks, a ground officer, would be Chief of Staff and in reality, the command glue for his new command. Brigadier General Ralph Stearley, who came from commanding Ninth Air Force's First Tactical Air Division, was named G-3. Brigadier General Stuart Cutler became the Plans chief. A former assistant division commander of the newly forming 13th Airborne Division, he had been chief of the airborne section of Bradley's headquarters since May.[350]

Brereton made key decisions concerning the staff. He disagreed on several key points with the Eisenhower philosophy and had stated such in a previous letter to the Supreme Commander. Having received a directive governing his terms of command, Brereton chose to interpret them with an Army Air Forces eye.[351]

Brereton's first meeting with his principal staff generals on 3 August 1944, importantly defined its own "doctrine" of operations, a doctrine that would have far-

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[350] *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Conference Notes, Combined Airborne Forces Headquarters, 3 August 1944. FAAA was located at Sunninghill Park. Browning's headquarters was at Moor Park.

[351] 322 1st AAA, Brereton to Eisenhower, 28 July 1944.

reaching results in FAAA's first combat operation. "Accepting" SHAEF's staff proposals of 50 percent participation by American and British officers, Brereton stated he would implement the SHAEF staff plan to save time but would make changes as he saw fit along the way. Designating the American "G" system for use in his headquarters, Brereton stated that the Adminstration and Logistics (G-1/G-4) would work closely together. He asked for a British officer to head G-2, as one of the concessions to the British, with Park's summary stating, "They have the means through their own channels and access to more than we have." This meant ULTRA, and perhaps agent reports through SOE (Special Operations, Executive). He asked for Browning's Chief of Staff, Brigadier Walch, for the job.[352]

Brereton stated that an airman must head the G-3 section for two reasons:

> First, the operational side of airborne operations is an air operation until you deliver troops where they are to be delivered. Second, no control over ground forces [by FAAA would be exercised] except to the air support they need.[353]

Brereton said the G-3 must be an American, and he chose Stearley, an airman. Parks thought Cutler should have been appointed to the job due to his airborne planning experience. Brereton, however, made Cutler the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, but noted that Stearley would retain control of executing operations.[354]

Park's cryptic notes concerning planning deserve direct quotation due to their effect on operations:

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[352] MHI, *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Conference Notes, Combined Airborne Forces Headquarters, August 3, 1944. He did not obtain Walch, who was not, as Brereton may have assumed, an ULTRA-indoctrinated officer. Brereton's G-2 was an American, Col. J.A. Cella.

[353] Ibid., 1.

[354] Ibid., 2.

The tactical ground planning was decided upon as not being half as important as the air planning. Must get a competent air staff. The air plan must be drawn up by us and AEAF is responsible for execution of it. This means we must get the very best air planners and also airborne.

General Cutler stated that the planners must have a common conception [to] what our three jobs are [and] what the organization of the Staff will take in order to proceed with the other work at the same time.

> CG stated that other organizations have had a period of organizing and training but we do not have the time.
>
> This is an air operation(s). Two requirements that are not [ours are to] parallel plan to a minor degree of training and actual movement of troops.[355]

Unknowingly, Parks had identified First Allied Airborne's key operational shortfalls. The air attitude that an airborne operation was an air-delivery operation, that the ground phase was relatively less important, and that AEAF would execute the FAAA plan was an invitation to disaster—a disaster that would eventually be forthcoming.

Browning's absence from the Headquarters (he lived and worked at 1 Airborne Corps), and what would become Ridgway's favored treatment by Parks, Bradley, and Brereton, also would not bode well. Parks developed close ties with Bull and his deputy, Brigadier General Arthur S. Nevins, at SHAEF. While Brereton and Parks would frequently visit SHAEF and 12th Army Group, there was but a single visit to 21 Army Group, and none to 1 Airborne Corps or Second Army, who would assume command in battle of the major operations under discussion.

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[355] Ibid., 3.

Yet, as August progressed and the skeleton FAAA staff created a smorgasboard of unused, outline plans, little indication of the true state of affairs leaked either to SHAEF or to the two Army Group commanders. If anything. the hectic planning phase begun by the SHAEF directives and priorities list helped produce the training in coordination and teamwork that would be needed when the actual call for battle came. So it appeared, until September approached.

Brereton, responding to Eisenhower's fiat, had taken the bull by the horns. Immediately, he confirmed with Major General Ralph Royce, Leigh Mallory's new American deputy, to coordinate their positions concerning the airlift of supplies. Put shortly, Brereton stated that FAAA, who controlled CATOR, would haul nothing, spending its time training and preparing for combat. Royce convinced Brereton that limited hauls of wounded and emergency items would be possible without stymieing his training efforts. This was accepted in principle at SHAEF, though SHAEF did mandate air shipments in August. [356]

The same day Brereton and Royce talked, SHAEF added the US 101st Airborne Division to the troop list for OPERATION TRANSFIGURE to reinforce Montgomery's alert notice for LUCKY STRIKE B. Given that this operation would support 12th Army Group in the Paris-Orleans Gap, Ridgway had been quick to recommend adding a US division, It was immediately apparent that, despite Browning's role as Corps Commander for the operation, it was viewed as an

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[356] MHI, *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Conference Notes, 7 August, 1944. Meeting with General Royce and Colonel Bagby.

American family affair, with two British divisions to be commanded on the ground by the US Third Army after it relieved the airhead.[357]

TRANSFIGURE's planning displayed the nationalistic and service issues that plagued planning by FAAA. Leigh Mallory immediately complained that his planners had been ignored, a charge that Parks unfairly assured him Browning had been guilty of. Once consulted, Leigh Mallory acceded to the basic concept of operations, quickly informing Parks that AEAF "had all air necessary and that he [Leigh Mallory] would be responsible for all air cover and air protection." Later, a perturbed Brereton, realizing that FAAA was losing the initiative in planning airborne operations, informed his staff that they "were out of the picture here," and immediately sought intelligence and plans appreciations from SHAEF and the Army Groups. Brereton intended to be the catalyst for the use of First Allied Airborne Army.[358]

TRANSFIGURE's cancellation on 18 August left the field open for a shift in operations that favored the northern approach. SHAEF ordered preparation for BOXER to seize the Boulogne area and to expedite capture of the flying-bomb sites.

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[357] MHI, *Parks Papers*, Box 3, "Discussion with General Bradley from my point of view," 7 August 1944. *Parks Diary*, 5 August 1944; *Parks Diary*, 11 August 1944; *Parks Diary*, 14-15 August. Parks notes that Cutler and Browning had been alerted that "General Montgomery had directed that 'LUCKY STRIKE B' be reviewed and held in readiness for execution on short notice." This confirms that Montgomery had sought the wide exploitation that he had planned in late June prior to Falaise, and that Bradley and Patton were reacting to plans in existence. SHAEF confirmed their interest in this plan on 11 August. Determined that his "Falaise envelopment" would be decisive, Bradley wavered on the "Long Hook." He asked that FAAA consider dropping divisions slated for TRANSFIGURE, to close "the pincer." He objected to FAAA's warning that a 72-hour notice was required to launch such a drop. On 14 August, FAAA was informed that "EAGLE" (Bradley) was "not enthused" with TRANSFIGURE plan. The next day, 12th AG's stance changed as it was made to note that SCAEF directed that TRANSFIGURE must be implemented.

[358] MHI, *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Conference Notes, 11 August 1944; NARA, 322 1st AAA, SHAEF/17281/1/Ops(A), 19 August, 1944, "Reorganization of Airborne Forces," confirmed Leigh Mallory's authority of veto over airborne operations. Brereton's concern was not only perceptive, it stated the problem that would dog his operations throughout the war. FAAA's insertion under SHAEF, without close links to the Army Groups or the air headquarters, denied it key information as operations unfolded.

Almost immediately, parallel planning and preparations for AXEHEAD to support 21 Army Group's Seine crossing, and LINNET—the seizure of the Tournai area in 21 Army Group's zone of advance—were begun. BOXER and LINNET utilized US airborne divisions under British command, with LINNET essentially absorbing Ridgway's command under Browning.[359] AXEHEAD, however, was very much the legacy of Montgomery's own pre-OVERLORD planning. Crerar's Canadian First Army had begun study of this operation in March, with the airborne planning added to the original concept.[360]

In this case, however, Eisenhower had initiated this new planning, using both De Guingand and Tedder as catalysts for ground and air planning.[361] Eisenhower's two-fold intention was not merely to maintain the momentum of his campaign, apparently, in any direction, but also to assure the use of his airborne assets before weather eliminated the possibility of large-scale airborne or airhead operations. More important, Eisenhower probably agreed with his G-2, who advised that "the primary object of any airborne operations should be to assist in the annihilation of the main German Armies in France."[362]

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[359] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 212-213. NARA, RG 331, SGS Box 65, entry 1 Vol 2, "Employment of Airborne Forces in Operation Overlord," Directive to Lieutentant General Lewis H Brereton, 16 August 1944, Subject: Airborne Operations to assist crossings of the Seine-Directive.

[360] NAC RG 24, Volume 10452, 21 A Gp/00/91/G (Plans), 1 March 44, 'NEPTUNE'-Directive to First Canadian Army; APPRECIATION AND OUTLINE PLAN OF OPERATION AXHEAD DATED 8 MAY 44; NAC, RG 24,Volume 20420, File 969. (D20), 21 A Gp/20748/G(Plans) 16 August 44, Subject: Boundaries and SEINE crossing sites.

[361] NARA, RG 331, SGS SHAEF, Box 65, entry 1, 373/2 volume 1, "Employment of Airborne Forces in Operation Overlord, MSG SHAEF, CPA-90226, TOR 162330B Eisenhower to Air Chief Marshal Tedder; MSG SHAEF, FWD 12912, to AGWAR, 161650B; Vol. 2, Memorandum for Chief of Staff, "Outline Plan for Airborne Operation to assist 12 and 21 Army Groups in Crossing the River Seine."

[362] NARA, ibid., Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, "Allied Airborne Armies," 21 August 1944.

However, logistics shortcomings played a role. Bradley viewed airborne operations as a threat to his pursuit toward Lorraine. This was encouraged by SHAEF's G-4 planners, who drafted a message announcing a 1,000-ton per day airlift capability for either Army Group. Montgomery and Bradley had already tapped this source in August, but its long-term viability became of particular concern to Bradley, from whom airborne priorities had been taken away.[363]

Brereton had been concerned, however, with more than the trend to air supply, which he characterized as "inimical to the maintenance of the degree of proficiency required to lift airborne troops." Noting the short-term, frenetic nature of the ten airborne plans created since D-Day, he shifted responsibility for problems to the ground forces while avoiding any hint that SHAEF and the Supreme Commander might be culpable also, saying in a letter to Eisenhower,

> Many of the plans were cancelled owing to the fact that 21 Army Group was unable to give a timely indication of what operations they required and a reasonably accurate forecast as to the timing in relation to ground operations. I conclude, therefore, that the mounting of airborne operations in relation to ground operations, when very close cooperation, timing and contact is required, is very difficult of achievement in a war of movement. I believe that unless the Supreme Commander can give an accurate indication of the trend of operations, which I realize is difficult in a quickly moving situation, airborne operations should be confined to strategic objectives phased in relation to the main battle but not closely dependent thereon in time and space.[364]

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[363] NARA RG 331, SHAEF/116/4/GDP, 11 August 1944, Supply by Air in Advanced Areas, and draft cable, attached, "Supply by Air." Final published letter is 24 August 1944 that ended the allocated 2000 tons daily on 25 August.

[364] Ibid., Letter, Brereton to Eisenhower, August 20, 1944. It is important to note that the "ten operations" were planned by Browning's 1st Airborne Corps, not FAAA or XVIII Corps (Airborne). Some of Brereton's views, particularly concerning the frenetic nature of the planning, comes from Browning's letter to him, dated 18 August. The quoted paragraph in Brereton is a near literal lift from Browning. Moreover, Brereton's desire for "strategic missions" is also paraphrased from Browning. What Brereton did not repeat was Browning's appeal for a clear directive on command and control of

Brereton's letter pointed out a belief transcending the ground commanders' inability to decide or place priorities; he offered up both contingencies and far-reaching change. He questioned the value of the operations currently on the boards—operations that, of course, pulled First Allied Airborne Army away from commitment in support of American forces. He claimed that planned operations against Calais and Boulogne, followed by ground link by 21 Army Group, might appear to be "strategic operations of high value," but that this depended "primarily upon whether it is the enemy's intention to defend a line from the English Channel to the east or southeast." He noted that this operation, or operations to the east of Paris to the limit of 75 miles would be possible from English fields on short notice. At the time of his letter, SHAEF's intelligence officer was stating that " the battle front has fallen apart," an additional prod in Brereton's favor.[365]

Perhaps the most far-reaching implication of Brereton's letter came earlier in it within a different context. He noted that three questions must be answered: Should British bases provide a near-future operation? Should French bases offering longer operations be used? Or should a launch from England be contemplated, with a move of troop carriers to France to follow? Noting that French bases—not in Normandy, which would grant little range advantage, but from near Paris—would make possible operations as far east as the general line, Karlsruhe-Frankfurt-Dortmund, i.e, the Saar and the Ruhr on the west bank of the Rhine. Brereton ended by dropping the gauntlet:

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airborne troops. See *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Letter, Headquarters, Airborne Troops (Main), 18 August to Lt. Gen. Louis [sic] H. Brereton.

[365] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 22, for week ending 19 August 1944, 4.

"I must emphasize that continued cargo carrying will render the Troop Carrier Command unfit for a successful airborne campaign.[366]

Eisenhower hedged. His reply noted that he shared Brereton's concern regarding the question of supply versus airborne capability, but he offered no comfort concerning the timing of ground and airborne operations other than his agreement that it is difficult to coordinate such operations. Nor did he feel it was necessary to move elements of the Airborne Army, troops or planes, to France, though he noted that following the possible landings near Calais, the dropped divisions might be left on the continent.[367]

Eisenhower's response was, in fact, no decision when a operational decision was warranted. Brereton, justifiably, wanted a priority mission in the campaign plan, a priority that Arnold supported. Content to await events, Eisenhower chanced neither the boldness of imagination to prepare to attack the enemy rear nor a decision to launch forces. Both points of view illustrated the chasm that neither perceived. Brereton, imbued with the belief that an airborne operation is an air operation and of value against strategic targets, wanted to move away from a shallow-distance link-up operation. Eisenhower, seeing that any large drop could trap enemy forces in close proximity to an Allied maneuver force intent upon relief of the airborne, would accept that his strategic reserve had been well spent, but he was hesitant to order his reserve employed merely to employ it.

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[366] *Brereton Diaries*, 20 August, 333. Most important, Brereton knew he was operating from a position of strength due to Arnold's support and Marshall's interest, not as a mere subordinate.

[367] Ibid., Eisenhower to Brereton, 22 August 1944.

Brereton's view, practical or not, was the view of a visionary airman. Eisenhower's view was that of a practical ground soldier ordered to be "air-minded." Only the circumstances and outcome of battle could prove either commander right or wrong. But, as theater commander, Eisenhower had temporarily scotched the idea of a strategic airhead.[368]

What neither man had accomplished was the end of the parallel plans for BOXER and LINNET, now that TRANSFIGURE had been removed from the boards on the 17th to provide air-transported tonnage and as AXEHEAD moved forward without apparent need of airborne support. Moreover, the Airborne Army Headquarters seemed more inspired by Tedder's personal interest in airborne operations than by their possible value to 21 Army Group. The political reality was that Tedder was maneuvering to eliminate Leigh Mallory, ostensibly by helping the new Airborne Army. The price of this was to help Monty, though Tedder avoided coordinating with him.[369]

While BOXER strained Ridgway's belief systems by offering American troops to help the British, it would be a yet unconceived operation, LINNET II, that surfaced open conflict. Tedder had become the proponent of the idea that clearing the coast of

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[368] *Brereton Diaries*, 333. On 14 August, Brereton quotes in his diary a message sent by Arnold to Eisenhower saying, "In view of the situation in France today, what is your plan in a very broad outline for the employment of the Brereton command? Troop Carrier planes are not comparing at all favorably with combat plane missions (other than supply and training) accomplished and hours in the air?"

[369] *Parks Diary*, 17 August; Conference Notes, 17 August 1944; *Parks Diary*, 18, 20 August; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2070-2071. Parks refers to BOXER operation as the "Tedder Operation" and details his involvement. Eisenhower seemed happy to let Tedder influence airborne planning. Parks notes he withheld key information on Tedder's forward planning during a planning conference with Montgomery's Plans Officer, Charles Richardson. The implication was that the airmen had decided that they and not the ground commander (Montgomery, who by Eisenhower's directive, was the commander to be supported) would select the specific areas for future operations. More interesting is that SHAEF, Tedder, and FAAA decided to shelve this "secret" plan without ever revealing it to 21 Army Group.

the V-2 rocket sites would finish the German high command. The north coast, not Bradley's advance, captured the airmen's fancy. Range was a critical factor. Without moving to the continent, the Metz-Saar approach was unreachable by a large airborne force from British bases. Tedder believed seizing a port was too difficult for an airborne force, so he essentially supported an area "drop and link" with a ground maneuver force that included an airfield seizure.[370]

FAAA's azimuth had been set with BOXER, but not in the commanding general's mind. With Brereton believing that he and Eisenhower—and not the Army Group commanders—should be involved, he strained to sell a purely air-inspired operation. He asked for Eisenhower's "scheme of maneuver," in order for him to coordinate directly with SHAEF. Operations UNDERSTUDY and FIELDS OF ETON apparently passed between Brereton and Eisenhower, or more likely Tedder, though no planning records confirm their existence, their objectives or state of planning. The reality then, was for FAAA to execute BOXER, the major operation being pushed at higher levels.[371]

Parks, hoping to prevent Montgomery from hatching ideas of his own, informed 1 Airborne Corps that requests for airborne planners by 21 Army Group must be referred to FAAA. De Guingand addressed this at a conference at 21 Army Group Main to coordinate BOXER. He stated that Montgomery's aim was

> to concentrate on a north-east thrust, destroy the enemy there, occupy the coastal regions and the low countries and establish airfields from which to strike into the Ruhr region. After obtaining Paris and

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[370] *Parks Papers*, Conference Notes, 17 August 1944; *Parks Diary*, 18, 21, 24 August 1944.

[371] Ibid., 21 August 1944.

> marshalling a sufficient force 12th Army Group to strike eastward into the Metz area.[372]

While Montgomery still acted as de facto ground commander, his "intentions" took into account Eisenhower's dual-thrust plan. It was stated that capturing the Brittany ports would delay a thrust toward Metz for perhaps three weeks, and De Guingand estimated that a major airborne operation would be launched in the middle of September. 21 Army Group, however, here was speaking of BOXER, then still on the boards. The 21 Army Group Chief of Staff also indicated that, once dropped, the airborne would be retained under First Canadian Army control for operations in the coastal sector for an unknown period. Brereton stressed that such a plan would rule out a further airborne operation supporting any operations until after the fall campaign. He emphasized that any plans for employment must keep "the long-range development in mind at the same time."[373]

Brigadier Williams outlined the estimated enemy opposition for the entire front as "23 divisions" plus reserves capable of transfer from other fronts. Seven of the 23 divisions faced Bradley, five were pinned to the coastal region, and a total of eight remained to be committed against either 21 Army Group or 12th Army Group. He also noted that the selected objective area, the vicinity of Boulogne, gave concern due to flak belts that would cause a dogleg, straining the range of the transport aircraft. Naval craft, cooperating with an amphibious landing, would not ferry troops ashore until the coastal strip had been cleared of coastal batteries. Williams stated that Doullens offered the greatest ground advantage in blocking significant escape routes.

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[372] *Parks Papers*, HIGHLIGHTS OF A MEETING HELD AT HEADQUARTERS 21ST ARMY GROUP 25 AUGUST 1944.

Brereton thought that the operation in the "Boulogne area . . . would not answer your requirements." He noted that the airborne decision should be what the Airborne Army could deliver within their capabilities that would fit 21 Army Group's requirements. Having thus shifted the ground plan to Doullens, Brereton appears to have crafted an adequate compromise without abandoning his independence.[374] Significantly, Montgomery was absent from the "plans" meeting, having stated his intentions. His staff had accepted the plan, which cancelled BOXER and sent the planners looking for suitable drop and landing zones for Lille, Arras-Cambrai, or Doullens. Lille, which was favored by Brereton, was accepted as the priority target by 21 Army Group. In moving up the target date to 3 September, SHAEF had to accept that air-transport of supplies by troop carriers would end by 28 August. Moreover, in adding 52d (Lowland) Division to the troop list at Montgomery's request, Brereton told his Chief of Staff that he would change the command plan. Hitherto, Browning and 1 Airborne Corps would have commanded the airborne troops. Brereton now segregated the British troops into 1 Airborne Corps and the Americans into Ridgway's XVIII Corps. FAAA would "command both," Ridgway was told. LINNET looked like it was on.[375]

Parks directed Stearley to investigate creating

> an advance command group in the LINNET area in the event that the Commanding General proceeds to the combat zone to actively command British and American Corps.

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[373] Ibid.

[374] Ibid. Brereton ignored the ground planners' concerns over seizing Lille due to its size, industrial buildup, and the implicit requirement of establishing military control over a huge city. Brereton, concerned about the airstrip, said Lille was an important ground objective because "it would facilitate the advance to the northeast."

[375] *Parks Diary*, 26, 27, 28 August 1944.

No changes in command were announced for the airborne phase. however, and Browning was designated as the Airborne Task Force Commander. However. signals were planned to insert XVIII Corps (Airborne) in a later phase, with FAAA's command echelon following. Here, Brereton clearly exceeded his reach. His command directive did not stipulate tactical ground command, though perhaps he assumed the corps would command themselves until relieved and taken under command by a field army. His own control of resupply and coordination with AEAF for air support would have been made simpler had he remained at Sunninghill Park or coordinated through 1 Airborne Corps Rear at Moor Park.[376]

Montgomery, meanwhile, had been given authority to commit FAAA to assist 21 Army Group's advance.[377] LINNET, additionally, was to be reinforced with another division to be flown in. While priority would go to the US 17th Airborne if it could be operationally ready by 15 September, the US 94th Division was to be designated as aerial reinforcement by airlanding if the 17th Airborne was still considered nonoperational.[378]

The LINNET mission, as stated by FAAA to its commander, was to:

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[376] Ibid., 28 August. NARA, RG 331, SHAEF, G-3, Entry 256, "Linnet" Book 1 and 2: Operational Signal Requirements for Headquarters, First Allied Airborne Army, 30 August 1944; First Allied Airborne Army Signal Communication Instruction No. 1, OPERATION LINNET, Army Communications During Phases III and IV of OPERATION LINNET; Minutes of Corps Commanders Conference Held At Moor Park At 1600 Hrs 28 Aug 44.

[377] *Parks Diary*, 30 August.

[378] Ibid., 31 August; *Parks Papers*, Box 3, Memorandum from Cutler for Chief of Staff, 30 August 1944.

> Seize a firm base in the vicinity of TOURNAI, Belgium, secure and hold [a] bridgehead over the ESCAUT river and control the principal road nets leading through TOURNAI, LILLE, and COURTRAI.[379]

Intelligence estimated that the maximum enemy force that could be marshalled against the airborne area in the first week of operations was two divisions (12 battalions) with a total of 28,500 troops from all formations, including 20,000 divisional troops of all types. All enemy troops were estimated to be of low calibre, with the enemy armor in the projected operational area "believed to be extremely low."[380]

In launching the operation, Montgomery intended to cut the enemy's line of retreat and to create conditions for a vertical envelopment of enemy forces caught between his advancing Army Group and the LINNET airhead.[381] LINNET had gone farther than any operation planned to date, but three days before "Y" day, a crisis arose.

On 1 September, Brereton ordered that planning for an alternate target for LINNET concentrate on the Aachen-Maastricht Gap. He "informed" the Deputy Supreme Commander that, in the event that LINNET is cancelled, the operation would be redirected onto the new target. Browning was informed in a letter which, after referring to his outline plan for the operation, stated:

> 2. An alternate target area has been selected for this operation as indicated below:

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[379] NARA, RG 331 entry 29A, Box 119, "Operation Linnet," Headquarters FIRST ALLIED AIRBORNE ARMY, Task Force for Operation LINNET, 27 August 1944.

[380] "Linnet Book 2." HEADQUARTERS FIRST ALLIED AIRBORNE ARMY, Outline Plan for Allied Airborne Operation "LINNET," 29 August 1944. All relevant plans, messages, and planning documents are contained in this file in "Linnet" Books 1 and 2.

[381] Ibid., 21 A Gp/20760/G (Plans), Subject: Operation Linnet, 31 August 1944.

a. Mission.
   (1) Seize a firm base in the general area LIEGE-MAASTRICHT.
   (2) Seize and utilize an existing airfield for airborne resupply.
   (3) Secure and hold the bridges over the River MEUSE from LIEGE to MAASTRICHT, both inclusive.

3. Y Date:

5 September.[382]

Only three days before, Eisenhower had confirmed, in his first directive as "Ground Commander," that First Allied Airborne Army would, in conjunction with Montgomery,

> plan and direct the employment of the entire Airborne force which is made available to the Northern Group of Armies to expedite the accomplishment of its assigned missions.[383]

No hint of this mission had been given to Montgomery, who still counted on LINNET, nor was any discussion offered to 21 Army Group for an alternative if LINNET went the way of TRANSFIGURE, BOXER, and the earlier plans. The sector chosen by Brereton was, in fact, not within 21 Army Group's boundaries but was assigned to Bradley's 12th Army Group. This plan surprised the Airborne Army staff and should have stunned Browning, who was aware that First Airborne Army was under 21 Army Group's operational control for planning. Brereton, for whom the air didn't seem to be effected by ground boundaries, had, of course, continued with Ridgway in seeking employment for XVIII Corps, ostensibly in a period during which they were to support 21 Army Group. "LINNET II," as it was being called, would

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[382] *Parks Diary*, 1 September 1944; Linnet Book 1, Hdqs, FAAA, 1 September 1944, Subject: Alternate Target Area for Airborne Operation "LINNET." *Brereton Diaries*, 31 August, 336. Brereton's account, which probably was crafted after the event, is mistaken on the date ordered. The Headquarters War Diary kept by Parks, as well as written notification of the change, confirms the date as 1 September.

[383] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2100-2101.

reverse Eisenhower's decision. Characteristically, the free-wheeling Brereton sought to inform SHAEF through Tedder rather than through Bull, who probably would have disapproved the venture in Ike's name. Given that 1 Airborne Corps was virtually "cocked and ready to fire," Brereton had made no change in the airborne task force's command, though his intent may have been clearly to eliminate Browning. The logic was clear. The bulk of 1 Airborne Corps would be American troops, with XVIII Airborne Corps inserted for command of the two American divisions. The force, if dropped in the Liege-Maastricht Corridor, would link with US XIX Corps and would communicate on American links. Was 1 Airborne Corps then even needed? Obviously not.

Discussion on 1 September, however, revolved not around going to Liege-Maastricht but around executing LINNET as planned. Air Marshal Hollinghurst, who had not been consulted before Cutler cut the air plan, was upset, but as yet no command crisis seemed apparent. Tedder, whose hammer over the Bomber barons remained significant, was further involved over weather issues. Leigh Mallory, who should have been coordinating LINNET's tactical support (which included heavy bombers), was strangely unconsulted. Parks did visit SHAEF, informing Bull of LINNET II's preparation. Bull believed the original LINNET would be executed, but noted that the 52 (L) might be left off the task organization to ease logistics—a recommendation that had not been broached to Browning, the Task Force Commander.[384]

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[384] *Parks Diary*, 1 September 1944. Note that Browning was told, not asked, about the 52 (Lowland) decision by Parks, though Parks did not believe Browning would accept this and no doubt would speak to Brereton.

On 2 September, Brereton told Parks that he had decided

that the tactical situation now warranted cancellation of LINNET and recommended that an operation in the Liege gap be undertaken and that we could mount such an operation on 36 hours notice.

This, Brereton stated, he would signal to Eisenhower immediately, and Parks immediately informed Browning and Hollinghurst of Brereton's actions. That night, 1 Airborne Corps informed Parks that Montgomery had cancelled LINNET due to weather, and that new plans were being investigated, but that the troops would remain on the airfields to accommodate the launching of LINNET II. Calling Montgomery's Chief of Operations (Belchem), Parks found that he did not know of LINNET II and that Richardson (Plans) had only a vague notion that the idea existed. While Richardson discussed this with Parks, Parks also informed him that a plan using British troops for a seizure of airfields near Rotterdam was under study. Parks then convinced Brereton to see Eisenhower on 3 September after speaking with Tedder.[385]

Early on 3 September, Stearley, the G-3, informed Parks that Brereton intended to tell Eisenhower he would launch LINNET II on the 4th. While Parks immediately notified the airmen to finalize their plans for the next day's missions, three headquarters appeared unconsulted: 1 Airborne Corps, who would execute the operation; 21 Army Group, whose priority had just been usurped; and 12th Army Group, in whose sector the actual operation would take place.

Montgomery's Brigadier Plans, Charles Richardson, on 2 September had recommended that the Polish Airborne Brigade, made redundant by the addition of the 52d (Lowland) Division to LINNET, be assigned a coup-de-main mission on the

Meuse bridges between Maastricht and Liege to assist Bradley, who later turned down the proposal.[386]

But it was no brigade coup-de-main that Brereton was proposing as he traveled to see Eisenhower on the original date selected to execute LINNET. Only on that day was Browning's Headquarters publishing "INSTRUCTION NO. 1," a revised outline plan for LINNET II. Browning listed as the plan's "INTENTION" that

> Airborne Corps will prevent the enemy from withdrawing across the R. MEUSE from inclusive MAASTRICHT to inclusive LIEGE.

A new troop list naming only the 1st, 82d, and 101st Divisions was included, with 1 Airborne Corps landing to provide command and communications. Division plans had yet to be drawn up.[387]

The original LINNET had been cancelled as the ground forces moved forward and the airborne lay grounded due to weather. Second Army was getting its stride in a pursuit that would rival Patton's best August days. Lt. Gen. Brian Horrocks' 30 Corps was in the van, with three armored divisions moving abreast, covering a fifty-mile-wide sector—the Corps de Chasse that Montgomery had so mistrusted after his North African Campaign.

Brereton's revelation to Stearley was soon revealed to Browning. Browning's operations officer called Parks, apparently as the formation commanders were meeting, stating:

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[385] Ibid., 2 September 1944.

[386] General Sir Charles Richardson, *Flashback: A Soldier's Story* (London: William Kimber, 1985), 187.

> The consensus of opinion was that if the expedition were mounted tomorrow morning the drop would be bad and we must be prepared to accept an extremely ragged disposition on the ground.

Parks responded, saying Brereton would accept such a result. Three-quarters of an hour later, Browning spoke personally with Parks, advising him that it was his opinion—and that of his commanders—that Tuesday, 5 September, would be the earliest the operation could be mounted. No maps had arrived, and with sorting and distribution the next day, they expected that no real planning could begin until the morning following the arrival of the maps.

Parks, however, continued to push the operation forward based on a predicted weather window scheduling the drop for the next afternoon and the following morning, before the weather was scheduled to turn bad for a day. Parks informed Browning, who refused to push the operation forward. Parks stated that Brereton would be making the decision upon his return from SHAEF, but that his "warning order" was meant to save Browning time if Brereton ordered the operation to go forward.

Brereton returned, stating that the Supreme Commander, Deputy Supreme Commander, Smith and his deputy had all stated that the operation should go forward, contingent upon the approval of Montgomery and Bradley, who were conferring on the subject. That evening, Browning was greeted at the formation commanders' meeting by Brereton, who stated that "the operation would have to be mounted tomorrow or not at all." Browning restated his views concerning maps and briefing.

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[387] NARA, "LINNET Book 1," Headquarters, Airborne Tps, 3 September 1944, "INSTRUCTION NO. 1." This two-page outline appears to be the only formal planning done for LINNET II, with no overlays, maps, estimates, or orders in existence.

Brereton stressed that "the situation with regard to the disorganization of the enemy was one which demanded that chances be taken," and that only orders or bad weather would cause it to be postponed or cancelled.

Afterward, Browning spoke to Brereton alone, stating that he "proposed to submit in writing his protest and those of his division commanders." Brereton asked Ridgway, after Browning left, if his "division commanders" included the two American commanders. Ridgway stated that they might offer an opinion prior to the decision being made, but that once a decision was made, they would carry it out. Brereton had what he wanted. [388] In his mind, he had already fired Browning and replaced him with Ridgway after successfully moving the airborne operation from Montgomery's area.

Within an hour, Belchem warned Parks that LINNET II would probably be scrubbed, and that another operation would replace it. Shortly thereafter, a messenger arrived with Browning's written protest. Brereton's plan, however, had misfired. Within twenty minutes, De Guingand called with orders:

> The Second Army advances on the line BRUSSELS-ANTWERP, September 6th, directed on WESEL and ARNHEM and moving around the north side of the RUHR requiring airborne operations of one British division and the Poles on the evening of September 6th or

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[388] *Parks Diary*, 3 September 1944; *Brereton Diaries*, 337, 338; NARA, LINNET Book 1, Notes on Conference at Moor Park, 3 September. Brereton's diary, which appears to be a postfacto creation, replete with errors, and which bears remarkable resemblance to the *Parks Diary*, repeats the episode verbatim but adds material concerning Brereton's intent to relieve Browning; Parks, who was not privy to Brereton's conversation with Ridgway, has no such statement in the Headquarters diary. Brereton apparently also wrote a letter to Browning. Neither appears to have been made public, and Brereton has no such correspondence in his papers at the Eisenhower Library; the actual conference notes do not reflect either Parks or Brereton's statement of "tomorrow or not at all" for the operation and state that one decision was made firm: the operation would be executed on Tuesday (5 September) at earliest. These conference notes are absent from the Headquarters Diary (Parks) and the separate file of conference notes in the Parks papers. There is no doubt that a confrontation took place.

Morning of September 7th to secure bridges on the RHINE between WESEL and ARNHEM.

The airborne would seize the bridges and the ferries operating there intact. The Rotterdam plan, which had not yet been assigned a name, would be set aside. Asking for a 1,000-tons-per-day airlift, Parks informed De Guingand that aerial supply would have to be coordinated with SHAEF. Informed of the change of events, Brereton stated that the "next move" for the Headquarters was to initiate steps to move the remainder of the Airborne Army, i.e., the American formations, to the Continent for future operations.[389]

The Paris airfields, not the Rhine, were Brereton's goal. He would ensure that Bradley gained the use of XVIII Corps. Brereton's was very much an American agenda, not an Allied one. The Airborne Army existed in Brereton's mind because of Arnold and Marshall and it was, to him, a proof of the American air weapon. Using it to support the British was never his goal or that of Washington.

LINNET II had torn asunder the film of unreality that had covered airborne planning. One of the critics of the airborne plans created at Sunninghill Park referred to Brereton's staff as "a bunch of enthusiastic cooks who viewed plans like creating a salad, and afterwards added the Germans to taste."[390] There was no doubt that Brereton and Ridgway resented Browning and that, having trapped him "refusing orders," they would have liked to see him off, with Ridgway made Deputy Army commander. Yet the planning problems during the August festival of plans had nothing to do with Browning. Instead, they were due to the perceived need to use the

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[389] Ibid.

airborne quickly, not simply as a way of employing two corps of picked troops, but to justify the tremendous air and personnel assets that had been sunk into the airborne forces. This urgency had been passed on by SHAEF daily, and FAAA accepted the challenge with relish.

Brereton wanted to work directly for Eisenhower as a free-lance, the airman who would change the ground picture by a brilliant "strategic" blow from above. It was doubtful that either Browning or Ridgway had revolutionary views other than using their forces as tactical adjuncts to an ongoing ground operation, though in Browning's case he was more attuned to fitting his operation to a wider scheme, whereas in Ridgway's case there had never been a case of his proposing anything other than a mass drop and linkup.

Eisenhower had created the Airborne Army as an Allied affair. Recognizing that it would be Eisenhower, and not Brereton, who would have to accept Browning's resignation, Browning, in discussion with Brereton, agreed to withdraw his letter and forget that there had been a severe disagreement over LINNET II. Given that Browning's corps would be executing the next operation regardless of whether he held the twin titles of Corps Commander and Deputy Army Commander, both men had little choice but to forget the incident. But the atmosphere had changed for the new operation known as COMET.[391]

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[390] Interview with General Sir John Hackett by author, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1984.

[391] *Parks Diary*, 6 September 1944; *Brereton Diaries*, 338. Brereton says this event took place on 4 September; Browning was then away at Dempsey's and Montgomery's Headquarters planning COMET. Parks, whose diary is the only headquarters diary, states it was the 6th. Moreover, Browning states, falsely, that he withdrew his letter knowing that Ridgway would command LINNET II. LINNET II was already canceled—almost at the moment of receipt of the original protest or "resignation," if there was one.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Campaign Plan

As NEPTUNE's planning devolved from high-level decisions dealing mainly with force allocation and command, the operational and tactical planning for the operation was supervised by the air, ground, and naval commanders in chief.[392] Absent their influence, the SHAEF plans staff developed their vision for the campaign following NEPTUNE.

The "Joint Planners," SHAEF's triumvirate of senior British officers charged with campaign development, began drafting the post-OVERLORD strategy in the spring, in the absence of any discussions with 21 Army Group.[393] The staff first surfaced its memos (which became the genesis of "The Broad Front") very early in May, and after weeks of internal staffing, presented a final memorandum to the Supreme Commander by May's end.[394]

This memorandum paper was not circulated outside SHAEF, AEAF, or ANXF. For SHAEF, the "Broad Front" was the basis for its liberation campaign and, from a command perspective, was its main effort to exert and retain operational control—a control that had temporarily been delegated to the commanders in chief then executing the NEPTUNE landings.

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[392] Eisenhower refused to name Montgomery as ground commander in chief, though for all intents and purposes he functioned as such as 21 Army Group Commander. (See chapter one for discussion).

[393] These planners were: Brigadier K.G. McClean (SHAEF); Captain P.N. Walter, R.N. (ANXF); Group Captain H.P. Broad, R.A.F. (AEAF).

[394] NARA. RG 331, "OVERLORD 381," Box 77, Post-Overlord Planning Vol. 1, February 1944 to 25 Sep 44.

In terms of Grand Strategy, Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff Committee continued to exert pressure to cancel the invasion of Southern France in order to continue a decisive campaign in Italy. This argument, which the US Joint Chiefs had relegated to Eisenhower as the "unbiased Allied commander" to decide, consumed much of Eisenhower's time and energy while his staff crafted "options" for his just-beginning campaign in Northwest Europe. The Southern France argument did not end until early August and helped solidify the US Chiefs and their agent, Eisenhower, in opposing any further British influence in strategic or even operational matters, to include eliminating British command influence. Meanwhile, Eisenhower's participation both in Normandy and in the follow-on planning was hampered.[395]

The often-touted "Broad Front Plan" was, in fact, not a plan at all but a study titled "Post-'Neptune' Courses of Action After Capture of [the] Lodgement Area." Part II of the study, entitled "Method of Conducting the Campaign," was published several weeks after Part I. Staffed within SHAEF, the paper was never finalized into a separate guidance document for senior commanders nor, more important, was it promulgated as a full-blown campaign plan with specific taskings, boundaries, force priorities, and complementary logistical and air plans. In itself a crude offering, its importance equaled the COSSAC and NEPTUNE plans for its influence on the war in Northwest Europe.

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[395] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 108-121. While Churchill and Alanbrooke saw correctly the Grand Strategic issues over removing landing craft from the Mediterranean and ANVIL, Montgomery tended to see only the shortage of landing craft as an operational issue and urged Eisenhower on these grounds alone to cancel ANVIL in order to provide for landings by 1 May. As mounting ANVIL was Marshall's desire, in no way would Eisenhower ever seek its cancelation, though he was forced to accept its postponement until August.

The Post-NEPTUNE Courses of Action memorandum was the initial offering in a veritable landslide of "forecasts," independent situation-based analyses and guidance messages to the senior commanders that loosely comprised Eisenhower's campaign "master plan."[396] This process of trickling short-term guidance invited continuous debate, gross redefinitions, and confusion as to long-term objectives. Rather than harmonizing flexibility during its campaign, SHAEF's secretive theorizing and Eisenhower's tendency for short-term directives became the center of continous disjointed arguments over the campaign's most basic intention—an intention that was given to the Supreme Commander as a directive. Eisenhower's directive from the Combined Chiefs stated:

> You will enter the continent of Europe and, in conjunction with the other United Nations, undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces.[397]

Freddie Morgan, Ike's Deputy Chief of Staff, defined the problem. OVERLORD was an operation with no stated object.[398] Finding that object—and constructing a campaign plan to achieve it—was SHAEF's challenge beyond mounting the invasion. As COSSAC's planners' had selected Normandy for the Combined Chiefs to approve, SHAEF's Joint Planners decided how best to reach the

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[396] Post-Overlord Planning, I; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 228, 229; US War Department, FM 100-15, *Field Service Regulations: Larger Units* [hereafter referred to as FM 100-15] (Washington: 29 June 1942); The War Office, *Field Service Regulations, III. Operations-Higher Formations* (London: 1935). Eisenhower claimed that a formed campaign plan, never varied from in its key components, had been created prior to D-Day. Both the Americans and the British defined essential components for campaign planning in their Field Service Regulations.

[397] RG 331, SHAEF 322.01PS, Directive to Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, 12 February 1944, 1.

[398] Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, ix.

object not defined by the NEPTUNE plan. Eisenhower's acceptance of their recommendation would put his mark on the campaign.[399]

Part I, "Courses of Action After Capture of the Lodgement Area," dated 3 May 1944, laid the foundation for the campaign plan. The planners sought to define "the heart of Germany" in light of the CCS directive. Believing that Berlin was too far east, the planners stated,

> A study of economic and political factors shows that the only area in the WEST of vital economic importance to GERMANY is the RUHR. If she were to lose the RUHR, and consequently FRANCE and BELGIUM, she would lose sixty-five per cent of her present total production of crude steel and fifty-six per cent of her present production of coal. While no other area in the WEST is vital to [the] GERMAN war economy, failure to keep the RUHR in production would rapidly starve GERMANY of the means to continue the war. Moreover, the effect on GERMAN morale of a penetration of GERMAN soil would be enormous; and, if that penetration included the RUHR, GERMAN hopes of carrying on the war for any length of time would be slight.[400]

Having pronounced the Ruhr as the key objective for the Allied Expeditionary Force, the planners could do no less than estimate that German defensive policy in the west would center on "keeping the Ruhr in production," using "all available resources to defend that vital area as soon as it is threatened." They concluded that

> an attack aimed at the RUHR is likely to give us every chance of bringing to battle and destroying the main GERMAN forces.[401]

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[399] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, ibid.; PostOverlord, I, passim. No formal guidance tasking for the Joint Planners is in the SHAEF records. Moreover, Eisenhower, who often dealt by memo on such occasions, left no evidence of formal intervention for the post-Overlord period's planning in its early stages.

[400] PostOverlord, I, "PS-SHAEF (44) 11, Planning Staff SHAEF, 3rd May 1944, Post-Neptune Courses of Action After Capture of Lodgement Area; Section I-Main Objective and Axis of Advance, 1.

[401] Ibid.

Having designated the Ruhr as the key objective, the Joint Planners' analysis of the topographic avenues to reach that objective was the most important discussion of geographic considerations since COSSAC's selection of Normandy for OVERLORD. Analyzing Northeast France and the Low Countries, four areas stood out for the movement of large forces. Following British staff practice, these were noted from right to left facing the enemy, a south-to-north orientation. (See figure 28.)

The Metz Gap, south of Germany, was noted as:

> a possible opening into GERMANY, but the country is broken and wooded and topographically canalises the attack. Even if the RHINE is reached, the narrow RHINE valley offers an unsatisfactory approach to the RUHR. Moreover, the greater part of this route offers few facilities for building airfields.[402]

North of this area, the planners noted the region often seen as an obstacle, but more often the scene of attack, the Ardennes. The scene of decisive actions in 1870, 1914, and 1940, its drawbacks were noted:

> The ARDENNES themselves, although not a complete obstacle, afford a very difficult passage to a mixed force and are easily defended. Furthermore, any advance through the ARDENNES will lead into hilly and heavily wooded regions extending from AACHEN to the HUNSRUCK, SOUTH of the MOSELLE. The whole of this area offers few aircraft sites.[403]

Violating their own orientation, they skipped an avenue north to Flanders, Britain's area of strategic interest from the Great War, but one which had brought untold difficulties. The planners objectively noted the problems:

> The plain of FLANDERS is intersected by water obstacles and considerable areas subject to inundation. It provides traditionally

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[402] Ibid., 2.

[403] Ibid.

> difficult going in the wet part of the year. There are many airfield sites, but construction and maintenance would be difficult in the winter months.[404]

Using the technique favored for staff papers, the best course of action was enumerated last, and in complete detail:

> The route NORTH of the ARDENNES on the general line MAUBEUGE-LIEGE, although it becomes a funnel with the most formidable obstacles at the neck in the area ROERMOND-DUREN-LIEGE-MAASTRICHT, is, from the topographical point of view, the easiest approach to the RUHR. Good airfield sites are found throughout the greater part of the route, although the terrain is less favourable for this purpose about ATH at the entrance of the funnel neck mentioned above.[405]

Knowing the weight of effort of the entire Allied ground operation might ride on their analysis, the Joint Planners wrote a careful but flexible summary that in fact became their as yet unstated recommendation:

> To sum up, from a topographical point of view the only suitable axes of approach to the RUHR are:
>
> a. NORTH of the ARDENNES on the general line MAUBEUGE-LIEGE.
>
> b. SOUTH of the ARDENNES on the general line VERDUN-METZ-SAARBRUCKEN.
>
> Both are only, relatively speaking, "gaps." Each contain[s] possibilities for defence, which increases towards the EAST: topography canalises the attackers on to narrow fronts in both cases. In the NORTH, however, are more suitable sites for airfields than in the SOUTH; and the Northern route leads directly to the RUHR. The Southern route, on the other hand, only leads directly to the comparatively unimportant objectives of the middle RHINE cities: and a wide turning movement through the RHINE valley would have to be made to reach the RUHR.

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[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid.

> From a topographical point of view the MAUBEUGE-LIEGE route, therefore, forms the best axis of advance to the RUHR.[406]

While topography weighed heavily, the "size" of the avenues discussed in terms of friendly maneuver-mass, namely how many divisions, airfields, and logistic areas could fit into each region, was never analyzed. Perhaps feeling this analysis premature, the planners moved on to the enemy, noting that the Siegfried Line "apart from the coastal defenses" constituted the sole prepared defenses to be considered usable by the Germans, and ruling out the Maginot Line as a defense in reverse and in disrepair. Considering the existing defenses, especially in front of Liege and Metz, the planners stated unequivocably that:

> Existing prepared defences, therefore, do not influence the decision as to whether the Northern or Southern route should be selected.[407]

Certainly, the enemy defense at the time of the lodgement's capture, the goal of NEPTUNE, would influence the campaign plan. The Joint Planners believed that a total deployment to the West of 55 divisions, with 20 retained in coastal defense positions, was most likely. A widespread abandonment of areas such as Norway, Denmark, Italy and the Aegean would net 26 more divisions, but these, they felt, would never materialize. While predicting Southern France would not be held, SHAEF's planners assessed that the Germans would define the battle area as Holland, Belgium, and the Channel Coast once the lodgement had been achieved. With the increasing inability to replace men and material, they predicted that huge sacrifices

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[406] Ibid.

[407] Ibid., 2. It is crucial to note that the "disrepair" of the defenses reflected their state at the time of analysis. The planners did not note that these could be part of a reinstated defense, a factor that did materialize. Moreover, the key factor—time to establish a defense—also was not considered. The

would not be made anywhere by the Germans "except in defense of a vital area such as the RUHR."

The planners assumed that if the lodgement deployment was achieved as planned, a force of 36 divisions would be in the Allied force by D+60, evenly divided between the US and British Army Groups, and

> thereafter the BRITISH forces will NOT be increased and may become a wasting asset, while US forces will increase at an average rate of some four divisions per month.[408]

The Allied Air Forces, assumed to have achieved unchallengeable superiority, would be influenced by the campaign plan significantly as

> the support that they will be able to afford our land operations will be considerably affected by the axis of advance selected, as on this will depend the availability of airfield sites on the Continent and the degree of support which can be afforded from bases in the UNITED KINGDOM.[409]

Prior to their final assessments, the Joint Planners listed a paragraph marked "Deduction":

> The main deduction we can draw from this is that there will be no great disparity in land forces for a considerable period. In fact, it may be as long as eight months after D Day 'OVERLORD' before the Allied land forces can be assured of a steadily increasing superiority in the number of divisions in the field.[410]

The deduction went beyond assuming force ratios; it established a key consideration that confined future action even before it offered an analysis and

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Siegfried Line and the Metz and Maginot defenses eventually claimed more than 100,000 US casualties.

[408] Ibid., 3.

[409] Ibid., 4.

[410] Ibid., 3, 4.

comparison of courses of action. In rough terms, it "situated the appreciation." As stated, this said:

> We must, therefore, avoid a line of advance which leads us to a head-on collision with the main GERMAN forces without opportunity for manoeuvre. In the early stages we must make all possible use of deception, surprise and manoeuvre, including the use of airborne and seaborne operations and threats to cause the GERMANS to extend their forces and lay them open to defeat in detail.
>
> As operations progress and our superiority becomes more marked, we must advance on a front sufficiently broad to threaten an advance by more than one of the "gaps" into GERMANY. By so doing we should be able to keep the GERMANS guessing as to the direction of our main thrust, cause them to extend their force, and lay the GERMANS open to defeat in detail.
>
> Throughout the operations we must exploit the superior Allied air forces to the greatest possible extent.[411]

The planners felt that air considerations would be concerned not with defense, but with the offensive use of the air forces to continue breaking the German economy and supporting land operations. Any land advance would not halt air operations, but a northern axis would facilitate operations against the Ruhr and Northwest Germany. A southern advance would tax shipping and transportation in that the 250–300 mile maximum operational radius for fighter aircraft would preclude supporting operations from the United Kingdom and require the forward placement of airfields. Tactical fighters, in any case, needed to be based on the continent, requiring placement of at least 75 percent of airfields within 60–70 miles of the forward line of troops. Airfield

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[411] Ibid., 4.

availability and logistics would then be critical issues. more favorably found on the northern route.[412]

The Joint Planners noted that the port capacity of the lodgement area. even when built up, would be insufficient to support the forces needed to defeat Germany. Noting the quick turn-around for the Channel ports and their location on the northern axis, the planners estimated that these ports would "enable a faster rate of advance to be maintained." Given the shortage of shallow-draft shipping, these ports would be essential in order to maintain the rate of buildup of US forces. Antwerp, the largest port on the route assessed, was not mentioned by the Joint Planning Staff in relation to the campaign during this stage of planning.[413]

Based on these premises, the planners finished their appreciation with an enumeration and discussion of courses of action, noting four broad possibilities:

a. To advance South-East from the lodgement area with the intention of cutting off the GERMAN forces in the SOUTH of FRANCE- thus attempting to deal with the GERMAN forces in detail.

b. To advance Eastwards from the lodgement area with the main threat directed SOUTH of the ARDENNES on METZ and the SAAR.

c. To advance in a generally North-Easterly direction with the object of striking directly at the RUHR by the route NORTH of the ARDENNES.

d. A combination of b. and c.[414]

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[412] Ibid., 4-5. It should be noted that most RAF fighter aircraft were "short-legged," with far less operational range than their American counterparts, which were designed as long-range escorts, not short-range interceptors.

[413] Ibid., 5; PostOverlord Concurrences. The Commander, ANXF contested this statement, noting that after D+60 the main flow of men and material would be in cross-Atlantic shipping, "for which most Channel ports are unsuitable."

[414] Ibid.

The Joint Planners discussed the ramifications of each within the parameters of their "deduction" and the basic assumptions identified. Beginning in the south, the planners noted that a drive southeastwards from the lodgement area toward Dijon or Lyons might isolate and destroy the German forces in Southwest France, particularly if the thrust was in conjunction with landings in Southern France. Such a thrust, however, would be nondecisive and would outrange medium and light bomber support from the United Kingdom. Logistics from the OVERLORD ports would also be difficult for such a thrust. Not recommending this approach as the "main axis of advance," the planners noted that

> a subsidiary operation of this type would be of value if it could be carried out without diverting forces from our main advance.[415]

The advance due east from the lodgement towards Metz, the second approach identified, would gain good airfield terrain and traverse good armor terrain, initially favoring a quick approach to the gap. Stretched maintenance (logistics), the lack of ports, and the undoubted necessity to rebuild railways would pose problems on this approach, as would as the belts of terrain past Chalons that would narrow an approach toward the German border. The distance of this approach would prohibit the employment of tactical bombers from the United Kingdom. The Metz gap was summarized with two statements:

> [T]his line of advance does not directly threaten the RUHR. It is considered, therefore, that the axis of advance should not be directed exclusively on the METZ Gap.[416]

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[415] Ibid., 6.

[416] Ibid.

The third approach, (third from the south) an advance northeast by the route north of the Ardennes from the lodgement area, stated the planners,

> [w]ould ensure a secure left flank resting on the Channel and the maximum use of our sea power to open up and operate the Channel ports progressively with our advance, thus greatly easing our maintenance problem. We should be in good airfield country and within range of air bases in the UNITED KINGDOM. Moreover, such an advance would be a direct threat to the RUHR.

The planners noted that water obstacles within the approach would hinder the use of armor and that along with a narrowing gap at the border would favour a defender. Their assessment of this was telling:

> It would confine our advance to a narrow front, with little opportunity to carry out any form of surprise or outflanking movement. Our lines of communication would be open to counter attack by GERMAN forces to our Eastern flank; and the GERMAN garrison in Southern FRANCE would be able to make good their escape and to enter the campaign in the NORTH.[417]

The planners, rather than comparing avenues and then assessing them, concluded their avenue analysis:

> It is considered that this course alone should not be adopted, as it leads only to a head-on collision of the opposing main forces on a narrow front, with no opportunity of manoeuvre.[418]

Having failed to note the size of avenues, the weather considerations, and the enemy defense possibilities on each, or having rank ordered avenues by priority, the planners offered a half-page analysis of an advance "through both the METZ Gap and NORTH of the ARDENNES." Rather than assessing, it bore the language of a conclusion, before the conclusion was offered. The planners began by saying:

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[417] Ibid.

An advance on a broad front both NORTH and SOUTH of the ARDENNES would have the great advantage that the whole of our forces would not be irretrievably committed to one or other of the comparatively narrow "gaps." We should have the advantage of manoeuvre, and the ability to shift the main weight of our attack, thereby increasing the possibility of gaining surprise. The enemy would be compelled to extend his forces, and our initiative would enable us to keep him in a state of indecision as to whether our main thrust was coming in NORTH or SOUTH.[419]

Clearly, the planners emphasized that the multiple threats of defending several "gaps" simultaneously while attempting to maintain defenses on the coastal strip would stretch the German defense, particularly if "a deep penetration" north or south of the Ardennes was achieved. They held that the situation theorized following a single penetration, north or south, would permit the Ardennes to be developed west of the line Liege-Luxembourg for lateral communications, as the enemy would probably not maintain such a salient as the Ardennes, despite their normal tendency to hold the maximum amount of defensive terrain possible.

Reiterating their abhorance of meeting the enemy head-on in "a narrow front," the planners stated that a mutually supporting advance astride the Ardennes was the most beneficial mode of advance, offering possibilities for surprise, deception, achieving superiority of force, and the defeat in detail of the enemy defense while permitting the flexibility to shift air force elements to support attacks.

The planners offered their "conclusion" in the 29th paragraph of an often redundant appreciation, which was more appropriately their recommendation—a recommendation that would be offered later in a separate document:

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[418] Ibid.

[419] Ibid., 7.

In the light of these considerations it is concluded that the best method of undertaking operations aimed at the heart of GERMANY and the defeat of her armed forces would be to advance on two mutually supporting axes, in order to retain flexibility of manoeuvre:

a. With our main axis of advance on the line AMIENS-MAUBEUGE-LIEGE-the RUHR.

b. With a subsidiary axis of advance on the line VERDUN-METZ.[420]

Having posited what they considered to be a thorough analysis, the planners on 30 May 1944 set forth in "Section II: METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE CAMPAIGN" their principal recommendations. Following only a week after their first section had been approved, the key to this study was

> the assumption that the GERMANS will contest our advance right up to the frontiers of GERMANY.[421]

Section II offered the first scheduled buildup of Allied forces to D+330, showing a progression of primarily American divisions being added. This buildup would bring a superiority in infantry for the Allies no sooner than D+200, though the Allies were predicted to have a definite superiority in armor following the establishment of the lodgement at D+90 (Sep 4).[422] The planners, in fact, stated that

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[420] Ibid. Note that this section was approved on 23 May 1944 by the Chief of Staff after presentation and discussion.

[421] PostOverlord 381, SHAEF (44) 11 (Final), 30th May 1944, Courses of Action After Capture of the Lodgement Area Section II-Method of Conducting the Campaign, 1.

[422] Ibid. Divisions were the "measure of strength" shorthand adopted by the staff, a measure that was both unsophisticated and incredibly misleading. The planners offered no discussion of combat power superiority, the factor of weapons quality, or the effect of weather on air operations that were assumed to be a key component of the Allied force's power. More misleading is that both the American and Commonwealth armies had huge contingents of armor, artillery, antitank, and engineering assets in separate battalions, brigades, and other unit structures rating below divisional formations, but attached for combat missions to corps or armies. Nor were the accompanying fighter-bomber and medium bomber wings and groups supporting the armies adequately considered part of the calculus of battle, as opposed to the logistical bill of lading that was uppermost in most minds and measured in division "slices," which do not equate to fighting power. While the additional logistical requirements were part of the logistical estimate, the additional weight of this combat power found no sophisticated system of analysis by the operations planners. Of particular note should have been the weight of airpower, which was limited by national boundaries and not applied in a centralized or mission-centric role as the airmen claimed it should be.

the Allies would maintain unchallenged superiority in naval, air, and airborne forces, including the lift capability for one amphibious assault division from D+60 onwards, a capability thought best to mount a threat "to contain coastal garrisons." Reflecting the influence of the air planner, airfield capture and construction were seen to be prime requirements for any advance.[423]

The planners recommended conducting a campaign that would prevent an orderly withdrawal to subsequent river (defense) lines that would prolong the Allied advance. They outlined what may be assumed to be a recommended operational policy:

> Our object must be to force the enemy to fight on ground favourable to armoured forces and in front of areas where communications offer suitable targets for our superior airpower. After every such action we should use our air and armoured forces to harass the enemy's retreat and give him no time to reform, at the same time using our airborne forces to facilitate the crossing of rivers and other natural obstacles. Our amphibious forces should be used to contain the enemy's coastal garrisons.[424]

Key factors assessed as affecting the Allied course of action were logistics, the capture of Paris, topography, German defense policy, the availability of airfields, and the weather affecting operations after D+90.[425] With the invasion yet to begin, the planners laid out contingencies, as had the COSSAC planners for the lodgement, but with the same "theoretical" basis, lacking preknowledge of the lodgement battle outcome, actual German strengths and dispositions, and realistic battlefield

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[423] Ibid., 2.

[424] Ibid., 2, 3.

[425] Ibid., 2-6.

assessments. Upon this, the SHAEF Chief of Staff was willing to base his recommendation for the campaign plan.

Logistics, as for COSSAC's outline plan, lay at the root of the operational design. The predicted phase lines that became bones of contention during the lodgement battle provided the most basic logistic assumption. Planners felt that by D+60, the maintenance and buildup for the British forces would be handled by Mulberries (prefabricated artificial harbors) and over the beaches, while the American forces would be receiving support from Cherbourg, St. Malo, and the minor ports of Brittany and Quiberon Bay, not at full capacity but in a rising tide of maintenance support. At the same time, Brest and Nantes were predicted to have been captured by this time but not yet opened.

British forces were to turn north to capture Rouen and Havre before severe weather set in and, because of shorter lines of communication, were seen as being able to mount attacks toward these ports a full month before US forces could thrust forward south of Paris. Havre's capture, the JPS predicted, would end the dependence on over-the-beach maintenance, but the planners made one firm statement:

> However, until after the development of ANTWERP, the availability of port capacity will still limit the forces which can be maintained.[426]

The planners estimated that Havre would be needed until Dunkirk and the Belgian coast ports—and "possibly" Antwerp were opened for the British. US forces would be supplied from Cherbourg and Brittany as well as from Havre, which would be transferred for US use. Railway repair was considered to be a limiting factor for

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[426] Ibid., 3.

any advance after crossing the Seine. Due to coal requirements, the planners recommended that the coal fields near Valenciennes be designated as an objective.

The planners stressed that Paris was an important objective worth capture, as its loss would deprive the Germans of a main center of communications. The heavy logistical price noted as a "civil affairs commitment" would require the operation of Havre to be completed to assure its accomplishment.[427]

The thumbnail topographic description given by the planners cited the areas both west and east of the Seine as being favorable armor country, but noted that the rivers astride any axis of advance would be substantial obstacles. The rivers in question included the Seine, the Somme, the Scheldt, the Dendre and canal, the Albert Canal, the Meuse, the Maas and the Rhine. The Oise and Marne, that had defended the Paris line in the Great War, were seen as possible "switch lines" for the German defense of Paris. The planners noted:

> From a topographical point of view, therefore, we must endeavour to force the enemy to fight in the good tank country . . . and at all costs avoid granting him respite to perfect defences along the river lines.[428]

DUKWs, LVTs, and amphibious cargo carriers would be needed to speed the seizure of bridgeheads that would permit a sustained advance.[429]

The planners accepted SHAEF's G-2 estimate of 22 April as the structure for their enemy defense assessment. This predicted that the lines of the Seine, the Somme to the Argonne, the Flanders waterways and the areas of Maubeuge and Argonne, and

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[427] Ibid.

[428] Ibid., 4.

[429] Ibid. DUKWs were amphibious trucks; LVTs were "landing vehicles, tracked."

the line Antwerp-Namur-the Meuse would comprise the enemy's successive defensive lines. The enemy's final line, indeed their "last resort," would be to withdraw their remaining forces, following their separate defense "stands," to the "network of waterways covering the SIEGFRIED Line and on the SIEGFRIED Line itself."[430]

More restricting to any Allied plan was the deduction offered by the planners that the Germans would "hold strongly the coast NORTH of HAVRE" while maintaining strong forces on the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean to resist landings until isolated. Repetitively calling for a fluid campaign, the planners stressed the necessity of mounting threats to fix German defenses to the coasts.[431]

The Joint Planners repeated the COSSAC staff's preoccupation with airfields, noting the limited capabilities of the tactical air forces to develop their full capabilities from bases in the United Kingdom. The planners recommended that to do so,

> seventy-five per cent of the fighter airfields should be within sixty miles, and the remainder within ninety miles of our forward troops.
>
> Further, the planners noted:
>
> It is also desirable that airfields should be sited so as to allow the maximum concentration of the force as a whole in support of operations in any one sector.

Estimating that the airfield terrain of the projected lodgement was poor until just west of Paris, the planners stated that these areas would have to be developed prior to any breakout. Thereafter, the northern axis offered superior airfield terrain in the US

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[430] Ibid.

[431] Ibid., 5.

sector, though this should not slow the development of the southern axis. Prior to Verdun the ground was seen as good; afterwards, it would be a limiting factor.[432]

The 90-day estimate, imposed by COSSAC and unchallenged by any subsequent staff or commander, implied a greater limitation—the possibility of worsening weather. The 36-day delay of D-Day imposed by the shortage of landing craft ate further into good campaigning weather, and the planners noted that bad weather would greatly hinder the use of naval forces for maintenance, assault, or mounting a credible threat to the coastal garrisons. Significantly—especially in light of the tremendous engineering and logistical effort needed to support the tactical air forces, and the "operational imperative" to capture good airfield territory—the effect of fall or winter weather on airpower, was not mentioned.[433]

As in Section I, the planners stated deductions for their vision of the campaign to be launched: that an early exploitation to the Seine from the lodgement should be made; that the offensive should carry as far as the Somme to cover the port of Havre; that Paris must be isolated or captured; that a direct thrust to the Maubeuge area must be made to force a withdrawal from the Pas de Calais; and that the North French coalfields should be seized. Finally, the planners hinted at what they believed would be a culminating point for the advance when they stated the necessity of the:

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[432] Ibid.

[433] Ibid. Considering the repetitive nature of the "method of campaign" section from the courses of action portion, it is strange that weather limitations played so little a factor in describing air operations.

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forcing of the ANTWERP-NAMUR position with a view to opening up the port of ANTWERP preparatory to the undertaking of operations against the lines further EAST, and finally the SIEGFRIED Line.[434]

Significantly, the planners asserted:

> Operations in South-West FRANCE would not in themselves contribute to the accomplishment of our mission but we may be pressed for political reasons to dispatch forces there as early as possible.[435]

The history of the Broad Front paper is less clear than was claimed by the Supreme Commander, nor does it advance recommendations beyond maintaining offensives toward the "two gaps" noted in Section I. Eisenhower notes that the strategy was approved on 31 May, but the staffing of the paper indicates that this "vision" was not necessarily seen as a blueprint, a plan, or anything beyond a concept of operations. When forwarding the final draft, SHAEF G-3 H.R. Bull, in his summary memo to the Chief of Staff, stated,

> This paper is principally of value as a basis for procurement planning.[436]

Importantly, SHAEF issued no subsidiary or subsequent plans to the Initial Joint Plan of 1 February and, unlike COSSAC's "plan," copies of this paper were not circulated to lower levels below ANXF and AEAF. Eisenhower's "approval" is not registered in the SHAEF files. Of more import was the fact that this paper was never

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[434] Ibid., 6. Each of these deductions was later listed as a "Phase" and described in some detail, with further rationale for operations. I have chosen to exclude their discussion as the campaign overtook these considerations, and that planning at 21 Army Group had already accommodated most of the considerations.

[435] Ibid., 9; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, maps following 224, 228, 229. This seems to confirm that ANVIL was not unanimously seen as essential to OVERLORD, despite Eisenhower's assertions that the staff had studied the problem of having an open flank.

staffed to the Combined Chiefs, who had, of course, approved the COSSAC Outline Plan and reviewed the NEPTUNE variant published in February. SHAEF, by eliminating the Combined Chiefs' right of review, was essentially taking them out of the decision process.[437]

Bradley began to look actively at a post-NEPTUNE campaign in mid-August. In a series of meetings with his commanders and planners, he began to sketch out an attack by 12th Army Group to the German border and on to the Rhine. Bradley, who met with Eisenhower on five occasions in early August, was no doubt in full possession of Eisenhower's ideas and intentions and would have been fully aware of "the Broad Front," as Montgomery was not. These Bradley began to modify into a plan of his own.[438]

Bradley continued to plan for the northern swing of the XIX and XV Corps to the Seine and across the Seine, but following a conference to coordinate this with

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[436] RG 331, SHAEF/18008/Plans, G-3, Post-'NEPTUNE' Courses of Action after capture of the lodgement area. Section II-Method of conducting the campaign. Bull had concurred with both segments of the study and recommended their approval by the Chief of Staff.

[437] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, ibid. Ike lauds this study in his memoir, but distorts both the scope of the paper—which DOES NOT include the picture he describes—and goes on to fabricate a single master plan for the entire campaign in Europe. The purpose of the accompanying map in *Crusade* is likewise a fabrication on Eisenhower's part. (See figure 29.) Divisions were never displayed in the original phase line studies. The Eisenhower map implies both a weight of effort decision and an articulated logistic plan to supply the divisions depicted. Neither existed at this time. PRO, WO 205 660. A copy of part I of the Broad Front Paper, dated 3 May, found its way to 21 Army Group's plans section, where it was reviewed by the American planner and marked "NOT APPROVED." The key conduct of the campaign component does not appear to have surfaced at 21 Army Group from any source. It is doubtful that the first part had been brought to Montgomery's attention, and the author has been unable to find evidence that Montgomery was aware of the section of the Broad Front recommending the structure of Eisenhower's Post-OVERLORD Campaign.

[438] The "Broad Front" concept paper does not appear in 12th Army Group's plans files, nor in the poor collection of papers retained by Bradley or his aide. The headquarters plans files are suspiciously bereft of paper from this period, to include an exclusion of FUSAG (First US Army Group) files, which should have been retained after FUSAG was redesignated the 12th Army Group, but which seem to have vanished. Conjecture on Bradley's planning can be made by commentary inserted in the aide's diary, and from a series of memoranda beginning in mid-August that have survived. The *Patton Diary* also indicates some discussion on long-term plans beginning in early July, when Patton moved to the continent.

Montgomery, Bradley met with Patton to plan the move of his Army eastwards. This plan—that the corps west of the Seine (XV) would revert to Ninth Army control for supporting the Tournai airborne drop, while the 12th Army Group "coiled for the next move"—was unknown to his nominal commander (Montgomery). The intent of this move was clearly stated:

> The Twelfth Army Group then consisting of the First and Third Armies will move directly towards the RHINE in the area of the METZ Gap.[439]

Having already been informed three days earlier of Montgomery's own plans, on 20 August 1944 Bradley issued Operation Plan NORMANDY TO THE RHINE, a concept dramatically different from Montgomery's plans and within the confines of Eisenhower's Broad Front concept (which was still unbriefed to Montgomery). Bradley announced in a paragraph titled "Directive" that:

> This tentative plan for future operations is published for the information and planning of all concerned. Details herein are subject to final approval of higher authority and to change according to the situation.[440]

Bradley intended to insert Ninth Army's Headquarters, with the US XV Corps to act as the required flank guard for Crerar's Canadians thrusting toward Rouen and beyond to the Pas de Calais to act in concert with a planned airborne operation, either

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[439] NARA, RG 331, XII Army Group, Box 24143; 12th Army Group Memoranda, Memorandum for Record 19 August 1944, "Additional Notes taken at Conference between General Bradley and General Patton at 1730 hours, 19 August." These notes are interesting for several reasons. This separate set of notes does not cover this plan. These notes claim, falsely, that they were based on "general plans for operations as determined in conference between himself, General Montgomery and General Eisenhower on this date." Montgomery, in fact, had not attended this conference.

[440] RG 331, Box 24143, XII Army Group Operational Plans and Studies, Operation Plan Normandy to the Rhine, 20 August 1944, 1. As with many US records in NARA, the maps cited for the study are missing.

BOXER or LINNET. Bradley's own conception for the remainder of his Army Group, the First and Third Armies, was in line with Eisenhower's basic plan.

> 12th Army Group's plan was that, following the Falaise operation, it would
>
> regroup and resume its advance to the northeast in zone, cross the SEINE, encircle PARIS and continue the advance to seize the crossings of the RHINE River from STRASBOURG to MAINZ inclusive.[441]

Hodges' First Army would encircle Paris by driving to the Rheims area while Third Army would advance on order toward the Neufchateau-Toul area. While Hodges was required "maintain contact" with 21 Army Group, his major mission would be to launch a "rapid advance with an armored-motorized infantry force to seize the crossings of the RHINE River from MANNHEIM to MAINZ inclusive."[442]

Patton's Third Army was also to "be prepared for further rapid advance with armored-motorized infantry to seize crossings of the Rhine River from Strasbourg to Speyer inclusive." Additionally, Patton would have to prepare to dispatch forces south of the Vosges Mountains through the Belfort Gap to secure the upper Rhine Valley. Reducing the Brittany peninsula, one of the key objects of the NEPTUNE operation, was listed as the fourth of Patton's tasks—a task that reverted to the VIII Corps, which by then received little pressure to finish quickly.[443] It was a task that had been primary of Third Army's assignments in the original OVERLORD concept, and one of the "true objects" of OVERLORD that Montgomery had spoken of in his early plans.

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[441] Ibid., *Patton Diary*, August 19, 1944. Bradley had intended to offer a weakened, inexperienced new Headquarters the Ninth Army as a sop. Patton resented this and commented on it.

[442] NORMANDY TO THE RHINE Plan, 2.

[443] Ibid. Bradley's plan makes no mention of the Southern France invasion forces, now renamed DRAGOON forces. ANVIL had been dropped as a codename at Churchill's request; he said had been "Dragooned" into accepting the Riviera landings.

Three days before the publication of NORMANDY TO THE RHINE, a remarkably unaware Montgomery met with Bradley to vent his own ideas on the Post-OVERLORD Strategy. As always, Bradley's silence Montgomery mistook for assent. His outline notes for their discussion, in their entirety: (See figure 29.)

1. After crossing the Seine, 12 and 21 Army Groups should keep together as a solid mass of forty divisions which would be so strong that it need fear nothing. This force would move north-eastwards.
2. 21 Army Goup, on the western flank, to clear the channel coast, the Pas de Calais, West Flanders, and secure Antwerp and South Holland.
3. 12 Army Group to form the eastern flank of the movement and to move with its right flank on the Ardennes—being directed on Aachen and Cologne.
4. The whole movement would pivot on Paris. A strong American force to be positioned in the general area Orleans-Troyes-Chalons-Reims-Laon, with its right flank thrown back along the R. Loire to Nantes.
5. The Dragoon force coming up from southern France to be directed on Nancy and the Saar. We ourselves must not reach out with our right to join it and thus unbalance our strategy.
6. The basic object of the movement would be to establish a powerful air force in Belgium, to secure bridgeheads over the Rhine before winter began, and to seize the Ruhr quickly.[444]

Montgomery's memoir explanation is apt for what he saw as his plan's key points:

> In its simplest terms this was the German "Schlieffen Plan" of 1914 in reverse, except that it would be executed against a shattered and disorganized enemy. Its success depended on the concentration of Allied strength, and therefore of maintenance resources, on the left wing.[445]

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[444] Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 239.

[445] Ibid.

Monty summarized his views in his periodic message to Brooke that night. Received at 1030 on 18 August, it equaled Montgomery's earlier challenge of the near-sacred COSSAC outline, whose outdated tenets had harried the 21 Army Group in shaping a campaign to meet the requirements of the moment. Unaware of a decided line of operation, Montgomery was again "proposing change" in what he felt was a lacuna of guidance from SHAEF and from a "Supreme Commander" perenially absent from the front. It was his proposed Master Plan for the continuation of the campaign:

> M99 cipher 18 Aug TOP SECRET
>
> Personal for C.I.G.S. from Montgomery.
>
> Have been thinking ahead about future plans but have not (repeat not) discussed subject with IKE. My views are as follows. After crossing Seine 12 and 21 Army Groups should keep together as a solid mass of some 40 divisions which would be so strong that it need fear nothing. The force should move northwards. 21st Army Group should be on western flank and should clear the channel coast and the Pas de Calais and west Flanders and secure Antwerp. The American armies should move with right flank on Ardennes directed on Brussels Aachen and Cologne. The movement of American armies would cut the communications of enemy forces on channel coast and thus facilitate the task of British Army Group. The initial objects of movement would be to destroy German forces on coast and to establish a powerful air force in Belgium. A further object would be to get enemy out of V 1 or V 2 range of England. Bradley agrees entirely with above conception. Would be glad know if you agree generally. When I have got your reply will discuss with Ike.

Two hours later, four copies of this message were delivered to Brooke's Military Assistant.[446] Brooke, en route to Italy and later to the Quebec conference, did not see the plan, but the Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Nye,

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[446] LHC, *Papers of Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke* [hereafter referred to as *Alanbrooke Papers*], M99 cipher, Recd. 18 Aug 44. Note that his digest for Alanbrooke deletes the specific details pertaining to 12th Army Group that were raised with Bradley, but adds detail such as the V-missile sites pertinent to the BCOS strategy discussions.

signaled Montgomery Alanbrooke's approval of the concept. Unknowingly. Montgomery was about to fuel a fire that determined the fate of the campaign.

Montgomery's logic for proposing action was faultless. SHAEF had failed to give guidance; Eisenhower had neither spoken with nor signaled Monty since 13 August. Considering that 12th Army Group had begun its wide swing up the west bank of the Seine and that the original phase-lines for the OVERLORD lodgement were essentially occupied, Brigadier Belchem's postwar statement understates the command requirement:

> In good time, before we reached the Seine, the British would have expected a clear-cut master plan to suit the changed conditions, which rendered obsolete the assumptions that had been made during the planning period before D-Day.[447]

Still in operational control of both Army Groups and as the senior commander on the ground (an allegedly inviolate American operational principle, at least when an American is in charge), Montgomery had every right both to expect to be consulted over future action and to receive his commander's intentions, as well as to express his own ideas and plans for the future. Eisenhower had obviously given these to Bradley, but decided to announce his own changes in a staff conference on 20 August, Monty then being off trying to coordinate the closing of the Falaise gap and the sorting of his own Army Group for operations in a different direction across some American lines of communication.[448]

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[447] Major-General David Belchem, *All in the Day's March* (London: Collins, 1978) 212, 213.

[448] *Montgomery Log*, 21 August 1944. A number of historians and Montgomery's official biographer misleadingly state that this conference occurred on 19 August. Eisenhower's appointment diary, reproduced in the *Eisenhower Papers, V*, Montgomery's messages to Brooke, and the TAC LOG of 21 AG have no record of this alleged conference for commanders. Bradley did not attend, but Smith, De

That Bradley had not previously informed Eisenhower of Monty's ideas of the 17 August is unconscionable; Bradley was a cautious, career-minded man who viewed Ike as his boss and his opinion not that of some foreigner (especially Montgomery) as the determinant of his future. Bradley had everything to gain in keeping Eisenhower informed. Eisenhower, in fact, agreed with this and had sown the seeds for a complete emotional break from alleged "British dominance," not just from pique inspired by Tedder, Morgan, and SHAEF's staff, but from definitive "front channel" guidance from General Marshall. Marshall had signaled Eisenhower on 17 August referring to adverse publicity concerning Bradley's being under Montgomery's command:

> [T]he Secretary [Mr. Stimson] and I and apparently all America are strongly of the opinion that the time has come for you to assume direct exercise of command of the American contingent. I think you will have to consider this matter very carefully because the reaction here is serious and will be, I am afraid, injected into the debates in Congress in the next 24 hours.[449]

Eisenhower needed no caution to "have to consider this matter very carefully." From the time of his direction to mount ANVIL, he had been waging a campaign to dominate the plans for Northwest Europe with Marshall's strategy. ANVIL's conduct, and its placement under an American commander, was designed to eliminate the Mediterranean as a serious theatre of war. The Americans would run the "suction pump" in reverse and remove their best formations from Clark's Fifth Army and effectively halt any serious offensives in Italy.[450]

Guingand, and senior staff from SHAEF were present. This was not another of the SHAEF "Monty refuses to visit" conferences popularly cited by historians.

[449] *Marshall Papers*, 4, 550, 551.

[450] General Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), 368-372. Clark, whose Anglophobia is unchallengeable, agreed with the British analysis of the Mediterranean Strategy

In an emotional meeting on 9 August, Eisenhower had confronted an overwrought Churchill, who attempted to reverse the Southern France landing decision in favor of a continued offensive in Italy.[451] Refusing to add his support to that debate, Eisenhower (as spokesman for the American Chiefs on ANVIL) had dealt a death blow to the British Mediterranean strategy. Ike had essentially ended military discussion of the issue, much as Marshall had personally quieted Clark in Italy. That chore accomplished, Montgomery (who had been demonized by SHAEF's staff, by the American generals, by the airmen, and by Eisenhower in private to his aides and commanders), had to be eliminated from influence and from publicity concerning the war. This was especially true now that success had been obtained. Monty, who could be blamed for the stalemate, was never to be permitted credit by the Americans for any of the breakout or capture of the lodgement. It was an election year and, more important, Marshall's confidence in Eisenhower was at stake. Ike intended not only to take command, he intended to put Monty in his place. As Supreme Commander, Eisenhower intended that the NEPTUNE campaign be seen as his own.[452]

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in the post-Rome-capture phase, and sought to keep his Fifth Army intact for a drive into Austria. He discussed this personally with Marshall, and viewed the subsequent decisions as "political."

[451] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 225-227; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2065, 2066 fn 1.

[452] Eisenhower, *Report of the Supreme Commander*, 39, 61; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, ibid., 2074-2077; Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, ibid., 263. Eisenhower denigrates Montgomery's role by referring to him as a "coordinator of activities." Pogue repeats this by claiming that Montgomery's command had become "that between the direction of an operation and the coordination of a joint effort." If this is true, it is because Eisenhower set out to undermine his subordinate's authority, or that Bradley chose to disobey or be disloyal to his operational commander, an American trait in coalitions practiced by Stilwell in Burma and Clark continuously throughout the Italian Campaign. Eisenhower's 19 August cable to Marshall downplays Montgomery's role as well as defines how Eisenhower always intended to divorce Army Groups. By itself, this is one of the most revealing of the signals sent during the war and underscores not only the self-generated hostility concerning command that Eisenhower had built up within himself, but also his long-term plans, which he had not shared with anyone except his immediate entourage or Americans.

Ike had begun this offensive with a three-point response to Marshall: that Bradley deserved credit, not Montgomery; that in his own plans, he had always intended to separate the army groups; and that he had been in overall charge of every dimension of the campaign. Testily responding to the litany of press charges on both sides of the Atlantic, he replied:

> It seems that so far as the press and the public are concerned a resounding victory is not sufficient; the question of "how" is equally important.[453]

Alluding as much to his own role as that of his American subordinate, Eisenhower stated:

> [I]t would be a great pity if Bradley failed to get the full credit due him for his brilliant performance merely because general instructions and policies he pursued have been channeled through Montgomery.[454]

Noting his staff's ideas as well as his own concerning the plan for taking over the control of ground forces, he stated:

> In forecasting probable developments it was clear to us months ago that about D plus 60 an American army group would be formed and soon thereafter the battle against the enemy in Normandy should be won and diverging lines of operation would then indicate the desirability of cutting loose the Commander in Chief of the army group of the north from the army group of the center. Detailed, day by day coordination of tactical arrangements would then be in the hands of these two group Commanders in Chief, with broad coordination and allocations determined by me. . . .[455]

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[453] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, ibid.

[454] Ibid. Montgomery might have made the same case for himself after Eisenhower became "Land Forces Commander."

[455] Ibid., 2075.

Finally when DRAGOON comes farther north. we will have Commander in Chief Southern Group.[456]

Ike continued his message with the following,

> Some time ago I ordered my staff to be ready to function on the Continent by September 1st . . . no major effort takes place in this theater by ground, sea, or air except with my approval and that no one in this Allied command presumes to question my supreme authority and responsibility for the whole campaign.[457]

Eisenhower clearly had decided to assume "direct exercise of command," a foregone conclusion from his appointment; however, the clarity of his intentions had yet to be aired. Ike had done nothing to maintain a band of brothers, instead permitting bickering and backbiting while he awaited the destruction of others, like Leigh Mallory, by his favored subordinates. Strong leadership would have curbed this; he demonstrated none. Nor had he ever approved "every major effort" as he had claimed, with the exception of using bombers to support ground troops and the too narrow turn towards Falaise that failed to destroy the enemy. Air and ground operations had fallen more to the respective commanders than to SHAEF, whose plans section produced nothing usable, and whose G-3 section did little more than read operations plans forwarded from 21 Army Group.[458]

It was characteristic of the men that Eisenhower did not tell Montgomery that he would assume command soon and that a campaign directive would follow, but

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[456] Ibid., 2076. Note the term DRAGOON replaced ANVIL as the code name for the Invasion of Southern France. Also, that the northern, center, and southern Army Groups never shed their numbers and were eventually simply referred to by them, rather than by their geographic arrangement as prefered by SHAEF. The southern Army Group was the Sixth.

[457] Ibid.

[458] The G-3 section in fact failed to update or refine their Broad Front analysis, which never matured past a typed draft with crude pencil sketches and mineographed, cartoon-like maps.

chose to use his staff; and that Montgomery, fighting a battle, asked his Chief of Staff to explain his ideas. Ike was no commander. He shirked the "hard" argument even with his American commanders using Smith or Bull to convey potentially confrontational news. Moreover, as Monty wrote his own directives and did his own operational thinking, it was always clear that 21 Army Group plans were Montgomery's, not a potpouri of choices offered up by the staff. Eisenhower generally accepted his staff's proposals and had them draft directives. This in fact had been done by the time Montgomery had learned of the changes in both command and strategy. The staff had provided a plan and Eisenhower, compelled by Marshall, had filled in the execution date. [459]

Acceding to Montgomery's request to delay sending the directive, Eisenhower no doubt considered De Guingand's arrival at SHAEF with Montgomery's "points" for discussion to be part of his Stations of the Cross in dealing with the British. As he listened to and then denied Churchill so often, hearing Freddie De Guingand was no more than a pro forma duty as "Allied" commander.

Montgomery included a copy of the points carried by De Guingand to SHAEF in his message to the absent CIGS, via Lt. Gen. Nye at the War Office:

1. The quickest way to win this war is for the great mass of the Allied armies to advance northwards, clear the coast as far as ANTWERP, establish a powerful air force in Belgium, and advance into the RUHR.
2. The force must operate as one whole, with great cohesion, and so strong that it can do the job quickly.

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[459] *Alanbrooke Papers*, 6/12/30; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2087-2089. Eisenhower's intentions were sent to the Combined Chiefs on the afternoon of 22 August as SCAF 67.

3. Single control and direction of the land operations is vital for success. This is a whole time job for one man.

4. The great victory in N.W. France has been won by personal command. Only in this way will future victories be won. If staff control of operations is allowed to creep in, then quick success becomes endangered.

5. To change the system of command now, after having won a great victory, would be to prolong the war.

Failing to accept Montgomery's points as outlined by De Guingand, Eisenhower traveled to Montgomery's headquarters on 23 August at the British commander's request. Their meeting would change the campaign, but its arguments require analysis of three factors: strategic relevance, operational relevance, and the effect of command on any of the possible courses of action. Moreover, these factors should be assessed as a military appreciation, not merely a political or personality conflict. Strategy, the Duke of Wellington observed, is an option of difficulties; it is these options that should determine the verdict on the next step in the campaign.[460]

[460] Attributed to Arthur, Duke of Wellesley.

CHAPTER SIX

AN OPTION OF DIFFICULTIES

By late August 1944, the end of the planned OVERLORD campaign had been reached, but its true object had not been achieved. The lodgement area determined by the original COSSAC planners, bounded by the Seine and Loire, had all but been occupied. The original port objective, Cherbourg, had been captured and was being reconstructed for use after extensive German demolitions. The Brittany port of St. Malo had been captured on 17 August, but the critical ports of Brest, St. Lorient, and Nantes had not. The essence of NEPTUNE had been to establish these ports, not simply for immediate supply, but for the deployment of the more than 30 divisions still waiting transport in the United States. The invasion of Southern France, renamed DRAGOON, had gone forward on 15 August, its object to capture and develop the key Riviera ports of Marseilles and Toulon.[461]

Logistics, as much as designating a concentrated operational thrust line, underlay Montgomery's proposal for a concentrated thrust, though the possibilities of developing such an offensive as originally conceived would meet with increasing modification as the situation developed along the dispersed front ordered by Eisenhower. Any option, however, was always laid over a history of cautious, pessimistic forecasts. SHAEF's G-4 had estimated in April that demolition of

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[461] *The Seventh United States Army: Report of Operations; France and Germany 1944–1945* [hereafter referred to as *Seventh Army Report of Operations*], I, passim; Jeffrey Clarke and Robert Smith Thompson, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1993), 198; Field Marshal Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, *Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on Operations in Southern France August 1944* [hereafter referred to as Wilson, *Report by SACMED*] (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946); PRO, WO 205, 21 A Gp/511/11/G(Plans) 18 Feb 44, Subject: Subsequent Maintenance of British and US Forces-'OVERLORD.'

facilities by a withdrawing enemy would average 25 percent universally. except that this level of devastation would climb to at least 50 percent for facilities within 30 miles of the Seine or any port and also for facilities within 20 miles of the coastline north of Dieppe, the actual planned forward maintenance area for 21 Army Group. Worse still, at least a 75 percent level of demolition was predicted for the ports of Le Havre, Rouen, and Dieppe, all key logistics centers in the Allied logistical scheme.[462]

The landing and transportation of supplies from the ports of Brittany and the Seine ports were estimated to be a significant brake on operations. The supply of the total complement of landed OVERLORD forces at the German border without the development of Antwerp was estimated to be achievable at about D+240. The forward army depot areas at that point were estimated to require a shipment of almost 26,000 tons daily alongside the shipment of supply reserves totaling nearing 189,000 tons.[463]

Early planning, in fact, had *theorized the advance of either both Army Groups abreast, or the 21 Army Group alone to the northeast if the Brittany ports had not been developed.* The lines of communication essential for these advances required an unrestricted use of the ports from Cherbourg to Caen for the British forces, while the American forces would require the use of ports from Nantes to Chartres, possibly requiring

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[462] NARA, RG 331, entry 35, Box 228, SHAEF/E/9007, 4 April 1944, Subject: Post-OVERLORD Railway Construction Study, 1; NAC, RG 24, Volume 20568, File 952.013(D123), MS "Liberation Campaign North West Europe, Administrative Development From the End of June 44 to Opening of Port of Antwerp Nov 44" [hereafter known as "Liberation Campaign"] (4 vols.), passim.

[463] RG 331, Entry 35, Box 228, SHAEF/1062/Log P, 25 March 1944, SUBJECT: Logistical Planning-Post-"OVERLORD" Operations, Tab A, "Assumed Phasing Post Overlord, Representing Optimistic Estimate of Process, and Tab B, "Estimated Tonnages Required to Support Each Advance."

> a comparatively long preliminary stand-still until these lines of communication are organized.[464]

From the beginning, logistics was seen as the arbiter of any operational thrusts, as the planners appreciated that ports, reserves of supplies, the formation of fully functioning army rear maintenance areas, and the operation and construction of airfields would require a two-week period of reorientation (under the original estimate D+50 to D+65) before any major reorientation of planned thrusts from the original maneuver planned could be made.[465] Considering that none of the "optimistic" advances predicted by the NEPTUNE phase-lines permitted the development of supply, port, airfield, or rail facilities as originally forecast, any rapid movement forward would require either a prolonged logistic pause, or drastic efforts to support selected units, or variations on the thrust-lines selected. The logistics planners considered this early in NEPTUNE's execution, though no comment on the Broad Front concept conceived by the Joint Planners was made.

In mid-June, "Post-NEPTUNE" Operations Administrative Appreciation No. 1, of 17 June 1944, offered an estimate based on the planners' latest effort, "Post-NEPTUNE Planning Forecast No. 1," which offered a Broad Front scheme of maneuver for D+60 to D+330 and a new set of phase-lines and a buildup forecasting a force of 63 Allied divisions on the continent by D+300. Along with it came a forecast

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[464] SHAEF/1017/6/Log P, 4 March 1944, Logistical Planning Post-"OVERLORD" Operations, Minutes of meeting, 1430 hours, 2 March 1944. Italics are the author's.

[465] Ibid., Annex A, 3. It should also be noted that a key logistical planning figure was the "division slice," a term encompassing the number of personnel/vehicles required from divisional to theater level to maintain a single division. For the Americans, the planning figure for a divisional slice was 40,000 men and 7,600 vehicles and for the British, 40,000 men and 8,000 vehicles. Additionally, three "equivalent divisions" were added to British forces for Independent Tank Brigades and LOC Brigades in the initial troop list.

of ports to be captured by certain dates. Considering their impact on the land battle, these should be noted:

Rouen.....D+95
Dieppe.....D+100
Le Havre .....D+110
Boulogne.....D+195
Calais .....D+200
Dunkerque .....D+210
Antwerp .....D+280[466]

The American port of Brest would be used primarily for the landing of troops and vehicles and the ports south of the Loire were not considered part of the maintenance of American forces. The early capture of ports in the American sector were forecast as:

Cherbourg .....D+7 (this varies from FUSA estimate, D+17)
Granville .....D+17
St. Malo .....D+26
St. Nazaire .....D+40/90
Nantes .....D+40/90
Quiberon Bay.....D+40
Brest.....D+50
Lorient.....D+50

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[466] MHI, *Papers of Colonel Frank Osmanski* [hereafter referred to as *Osmanski Papers*], SHAEF G-4 Division, 381 (GDP) SHAEF /1062/7/GDP, "Post-'Neptune' Operations Administrative Appreciation No. 1, 17 June 1944, 1, 2. Note that Annexure A of this document contains a complete discussion of the "summary of manoeuvre" forecast by the G-3 planners as well as planning maps delineating phase lines and illustrating the development of advance bases and forward depot areas. This appreciation was not approved and forwarded until 3 July 1944.

All ports were expected to be producing some tonnage by D+60.[467] In addition to supplies, bulk POL (petrol, oil, lubricants) delivery in tonnage was predicted to be in excess of 13,200 tons daily by D+90 and 15, 271 tons by D+180.[468]

Rail transportation was to be a key element of any movement beyond the lodgement area. Allied airpower had done much to devastate main rail lines; the withdrawing Germans demolished most of that which remained.[469] Lines were needed from the Brittany ports to maintain US forces and to supply the Paris area. British forces would need rail support dramatically after the period D+90/120 as they moved up the coast, but if the phase line development forecast for both operations and logistics were met, much of the rail capacity south of the Seine would revert to US use as the Channel ports and their rail lines were restored.[470]

The logisticians offered three inescapable conclusions among their many observations:

1. That port capacities would support forecast operations only if ports were captured and developed per the forecast. No margin for additional capacity would exist except for the ports south of the Loire, which were not scheduled for use.

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[467] Ibid., Annexure C.

[468] Ibid., Annexure K. Note that the G-4 planners estimated that the supply requirement for a divisional slice was 800 tons daily for an operating US division; 500 tons daily for a staging US division; and 700 tons daily for an operating British divisional slice. (See Annexure D).

[469] Administrative Appreciation No. 1, 7; Joseph Bykofsky and Harold Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1957, 1990), 242-244; The War Office, *Transportation: The Second World War 1939-1945, Army* (London: 1950), 147-149; The War Office, *Administrative Planning: The Second World War 1939-1945, Army* [hereafter referred to as *Administrative Planning*] (London: 1952), Chapter XV, passim, Appendices E, F.

[470] Administrative Appreciation No. 1, 7.

2. That reserves of supply beyond 21 days would not be accumulated until late in the campaign due to port development.

3. With the known road/truck capacity, the movement of stores inland could be met only if the rail development plans were met.[471]

While ports and their development dominated the administrative plan, it was known that the shift of ports northeastward by the British would reduce tonnage and distance for their own forces and that the prime support of the American forces would come first through the Cotentin ports, and then through their development of the Brittany ports and the Quiberon Bay project. As a result, the logistical planners estimated that:

> The main thrust by the US forces from the lodgement area is not likely to take place before D plus 120.

Moreover, the Americans required additional sustenance as their forces grew. It was noted that:

> Soon after the capture of PARIS about D plus 135, it will be advisable, in view of the length of the [lines of communication], to form a second US advanced base in the neighbourhood . . . it will thereafter hold a major part of US reserves brought in after this period, except those required further forward for greater accessibility.[472]

Logistics, of course, was the most complex of the Allied relationships. Operations such as air were driven by urgency of time; logistics had a theology all its own that the major Allies never agreed upon. The OVERLORD debate over adequate shipping was indicative of this, but now the mechanics of delivery took on a

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[471] Ibid., 8, 9.

[472] Ibid., 12.

remarkable role, the determiners of which seemed to be faceless bureaucrats, overly complicated procedures, and men who consistently warned against doing some plan but who never seemed to advise the commanders "what they can do." Worse, the machinery for logistics had never been fine-tuned to the reality of war.

Eisenhower's own role in failing to prepare his American theater "COMZ" (Communications Zone) was a significant problem. While reforming his overall ETOUSA (European Theater of Operations, US Army) organization and un-naming his hated logistics chief, Lt. Gen. John C.H. Lee, as Deputy Theater Commander, Eisenhower had not solved the same problems that overshadowed the first great American Expeditionary Force commander, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. His field commanders continued to bicker and blame logisticians for supply problems, problems were not solved, and Eisenhower, fearing a showdown with the Chief of Army Service Forces in Washington, Lt. Gen. Brehon Somervell, was remarkably timid in complaining or demanding a more effective structure when visited by Somervell's troubleshooters in April 1944.[473]

Moreover, the stopgap measures favored by the ground commanders brought horror to the planners, who saw that they led not only to diminishing returns but to unquenchable future demands. These would be unfilled due to the impending

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[473] Steve R. Waddell, *United States Army Logistics: The Normandy Campaign, 1944* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), Chapters 1, 5; Graham and Bidwell, *Coalitions*, Chapter 12; John Kennedy Ohl, *Supplying the Troops: General Somervell and American Logistics in World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 227-229. Eisenhower was a master player in US Army politics and feared Marshall and his henchmen, the heads of AAF and ASF. Given Somervell's tremendous standing with Marshall, Eisenhower's effectiveness in dealing with supply issues was neutralized in the same way his dealings with air issues were for fear of antagonizing Arnold. While Eisenhower complained to his subordinates, he needed a crisis in the winter of 1944 before he would act. Even then, the crisis had to be painted as reflecting neither on Marshall's War Department nor on Eisenhower's own theater.

maintenance disaster of running unserviced trucks and aircraft at a high tempo for indefinite periods. These trucking lines, the Red Lion and Red Ball Express, were delivering rates adequate to sustain movement, but not to stock supplies and fuel forward, a spiraling diminution of future capabilities. The use of air transport, temporarily solved by the formation of CATOR (the Combined Air Transport Operations Room) for assigning priority lift, was directly in opposition to Eisenhower's own creation of the First Allied Airborne Army, whose charter was to combine air transport and airborne forces to mount combat operations. FAAA demanded that air transport of supplies stop for the training of troop carrier and airborne units, a direct blow to the ground commanders wishing only supply. Bradley, the biggest benefactor of air supply, steadfastly opposed airborne operations.[474]

Eisenhower, therefore, had more than simply the allocation of forces to predetermined avenues as a problem. Montgomery had stressed the operational concept of a concentrated operational thrust, both to Bradley and Alanbrooke and to Eisenhower via De Guingand in his "points" paper. Yet, in these written communications, he failed to gain acceptance on the obvious element of priority of logistics, the basic conclusion that had driven him to propose the maneuver itself. As he sought to meet with Eisenhower, this topic would be one of his key points, no less than a determinant of how operations would progress. And, in the argument, as time made the logistics situation more unfavorable, Eisenhower viewed the Montgomery proposal as "exclusionary," not a rationale for continued decisive action. Thus, logistics became the sword that cut the cord to the other key elements of

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[474] *21 Army Group Administrative History*, 31-61; "Liberation Campaign," 33-45; see Chapter Four for

Montgomery's proposal, which were the thrust itself, and command and/or control, neither of which followed Eisenhower's preconception as defined by the Joint Planners. Though Monty was offering a logistical stopgap, Eisenhower neither saw this, nor did he hark back to the obvious conclusion—that the Americans had failed to carry out their part of the OVERLORD plan in capturing ports—nor would he permit temporarily halting the American advance while Montgomery moved up to establish the Seine ports base as had been foreseen by the planners.[475]

Clearly, the Brittany ports were essential to the American portion, indeed, the larger portion of the Allied Campaign Plan. Yet, by 22 August, the day that Eisenhower disapproved De Guingand's proposal on Monty's behalf, the Americans had done little to fulfill the original concept. Brest, which had been Pershing's major port for deploying the AEF, was likewise chosen for the new AEF for the same reasons. Its deep-water facilities, port capabilities, and open approach to the Atlantic made it the prime port considered for Eisenhower's follow-on force of American divisions. Yet Brittany's ports still tied up four divisions, including a priceless asset, an armored division, parked in the bocage outside of a port—a totally useless instrument and a stark commentary on Bradley's knowledge of mobile, armored warfare.[476] As before in Normandy, Bradley could not fight in two directions, a problem that would arise continually, but not simply in the American camp.

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discussion of effect of First Allied Airborne.

[475] *Alanbrooke Papers*, 6/2/31: M99, M521, Appendix B. It should be remembered that the object of OVERLORD was to gain a lodgement capable of supporting 26-30 divisions.

[476] *Third Army After Action Report*, I Situation Map, 21 August 1944; *Patton Diary*, 4, 13 August; Hanson W. Baldwin, *Tiger Jack* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1979), 42-46. Patton's haste to turn into Brittany both the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions, arguably the two best formations of armor to serve in his Army throughout the war, demonstrated that the Americans more than Monty were concerned about following the original NEPTUNE design. Indeed, the 4th Armored's tempestuous

Montgomery's administration posed more unique problems. Close to his main base, the War Office handled supply and administration until late in the Normandy campaign, and his own need for rail and long-haul road supply did not match Bradley's forces on the outside of the Allied armies, the "marching wing" spoken of so dramatically by Eisenhower. While Red Lion was as much a stopgap as the overly praised Red Ball Express, the frantic supply technique using long-haul trucks made more sense in Montgomery's 21 Army Group sector as he was actually moving forward toward his planned advanced base area and the major ports to supply his campaign against the German West Wall.[477]

Montgomery had foreseen this. In March, he had initiated planning by Crerar's headquarters for AXEHEAD, the crossing of the Seine and seizure of his planned administrative base and ports on the Channel in conjunction with the Second British Army.[478] AXEHEAD was unpopular with the SHAEF logistic planners, as was LUCKY STRIKE, because both jeapordized a methodical move forward while

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commander, Maj. Gen. John Wood, argued that "we are winning the war the wrong way (in the wrong direction)" when ordered westward by an irate Patton. Once it was clear that Brest and Loricnt would be defended, releasing the armor, the only self-contained and self-mobile formations in the American camp should have been obvious. Bradley held back. Patton remained silent on the topic. 6th Armored "contained" Brest and then Lorient, not being relieved of duty in the bocage until 12 September. Contrary to the Germans, who considered their panzer formations to be their true operational weapon, the Americans—despite their printed doctrine—never grasped the operational import of concentrating armor or using it as an operational-level weapon; interview with Maj. Gen. Peter C. Hains III, 1991, by author.

[477] "Liberation Campaign," ibid.; *Administrative Planning*, 52-54, 88-91; *21 Army Group Administrative History*, 33-34, 46-47. During early September, some 1,400 British trucks were found to have defective pistons; how many of these trucks were "non-runners" on any specific day is not clear, nor is the time span of the problem.

[478] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10452, "Operation AXEHEAD," Volume 10433, HQ Airtps/2500/80/G, 3 June 44, "Employment of an Airborne Division During AXEHEAD." These two files contain information on the forecasts for NEPTUNE, and detailed planning guidance for the assault across the Seine to seize the Seine port areas. Indications are that AXEHEAD's conceptual planning began early in March, the earlier files being destroyed when replaced by more developed plans. Included in file is discussion for use of 79th Armoured Division's specialized vehicles known as "Funnies," special engineer requirements, outline planning for attacks on Le Havre and Dieppe, planning directives for

establishing dumps, depots, pipelines, and rail from the "scheduled" openings of ports. Moreover, AXEHEAD led to an unpopular notion that 21 Army Group's 16 divisions would move forward past D+90 while 12th Army Group built up stores and reserves. Nor did SHAEF's logisticians see Monty continuing simply to move up the coast in a continuous maneuver. The planners estimated that the Seine ports would not be captured until D+120 and, until "developed," would require an additional one-month "stand-down" by Montgomery's forces.[479]

That the ostensibly logistics-cautious Monty had both advocated and then executed LUCKY STRIKE—focusing on the battle at hand while pushing for the wider envelopment to the coast combined with an execution of AXEHEAD, despite the obvious logistical risks for the future—must have inspired additional resistance to SHAEF's support for any plans he advanced. Lt. Gen Humphrey Gale, Eisenhower's Chief Administrative Officer, was one of Montgomery's critics at SHAEF. Helping Monty, even to hurt the Germans, was anathema at SHAEF. This was especially true since SHAEF's G-4 Plans and Movements Sections were headed by Americans.[480]

AXEHEAD, an inventory of landing craft available (for planning purposes) for a "Provisional Naval Assault Force" and two detailed appreciations of current planning by Crerar concerning AXEHEAD.

[479] Roland Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, I (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, US Army, 1953), 461, 487; NARA RG 407, Entry 427, Box 1978, 1st Army 101-3.5 OVERLORD, "21 A Gp/20698/G(Plans), 14 June 1944," Directive to Commanding General First United States Army Group, "Subsidiary Operations to further OVERLORD." This memo and its attachments outline the relative issues of HANDS UP, LUCKY STRIKE, BENEFICIARY, and CHASTITY (Quiberon Bay project) as seen by 21 Army Group. It shows the continuity of plans that were expressed in Montgomery's "M" series directives; NAC RG 24, Volume 10540, File 215A21.013(D28) has most complete logistical assessments and overlays concerning LUCKY STRIKE. It also includes the complete logistical "problems" appreciation of having "minimal time" between phase lines—the actual situation that developed.

[480] MHI, *Osmanski Papers*. The head of the plans section wrote a bitter memoir attacking the Field Marshal. See "Field Marshal Montgomery" in his papers. Eisenhower also apparently dealt directly around the SHAEF G-4 with them while planning to keep the Americans moving, if need be at the expense of the British. See memos on wide envelopment included within the papers. Montgomery thought Gale was incompetent and blamed him for logistics problems in Italy during the 1943 campaign.

SHAEF also relied heavily on poaching on 21 Army Group's organic transportation assets to supply 12th Army Group. This was apparent not only during the breakout phase from Normandy, but also during the encirclement operations for the Falaise pocket. The turn north across the Seine continued this trend. Given the delayed start of the invasion, the predictable gale season which would close down over-the-beach supply operations, the failure to capture and develop their own ports, and the perceived need to simultaneously land more divisions and a supply reserve for them, the specter of "wintering in Normandy" for 12th Army Group loomed as a possibility in August despite the operational successes of NEPTUNE. Five British truck companies were given to Bradley on 1 August and were later joined by British rail engineers to support American construction. These loans were extended to operations beyond the Seine. Air transport of supplies, of course, all went to US forces except for a few scheduled sorties.[481]

Central to the unsolved Brittany port problem was the CHASTITY Plan, or the Quiberon Bay Project. Quiberon Bay, northwest of the Loire Estuary, was chosen for the creation of a large artificial port to offset the need to develop the Loire ports of Nantes and the heavily defended U-Boat base at St. Nazaire. It required the neutralization of St. Nazaire's batteries, and the capture of Belle Isle that dominated its approaches. Once established, it offered the possibility of deferring the capture of St. Nazaire and Nantes.

CHASTITY was crucial for more than just portage. SHAEF was pressed to reduce the amount of shipping allocated to supporting NEPTUNE, a large backlog of

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[481] "Liberation Campaign," 19-21.

which was awaiting unloading. Due to the projected withdrawal of critical "coasters" after D+42, this would require that deeper-draft US Liberty ships assume a greater load. This meant that lighters were needed until the projected D+90 period. Quiberon Bay's sheltered beach, four nearby minor ports, and a local rail and road network would not only be more efficient, but would also make possible the transfer of future arrivals of divisions from the more distant Brest port, the Cotentin or St. Malo ports, and would be closer to the US First and Third Armies, respectively.[482]

The late capture of Brittany ports, the rapid advance, and the failure to capture Brest all led to different considerations for CHASTITY. Quiberon Bay was reached by 5 August, but the key Belle Island positions were not fully cleared even two weeks later. The creation of the full anchorage then was held in abeyance at the height of the turn both into Brittany and eastwards towards the Seine, at the exact moment when logistics was beginning to show its greatest strain.

The conduct of the Brittany Campaign was the culprit. Montgomery continued to name the Brittany ports within his operational directives, but the focus on "business to the east" left Bradley to manage his own forces, and he and Patton ignored Brittany.[483] Moreover, the American Theater Commander, Eisenhower, for whom American supply and deployment were key responsibilities, failed to ensure his American subordinates understood the full implications of the entire Brittany plan.

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[482] General Board Study, No. 1, 21, 22; CMH MS, ML-754, *Outline Chronology of Notes on the History of Continental Operations, II*, 35-42.

[483] Bradley's ascension to Army Group Commander left Montgomery with broad operational directive control but far less ability to discuss individual objectives and tactics with Bradley, who grew increasingly prickly under British command. Monty might have suggested that the divisions "masked" by the Bradley-inspired tight envelopment at Falaise be transferred to Third Army to clear the southern Brittany port areas of Quiberon Bay and St. Nazaire, but this was one of the hazards of a coalition

Brest, the port selected for deployment, did not equal Quiberon Bay, which had been carefully chosen by the Chief of Movements of COMZ to solve the problem of supplying Third Army. However, the reduction of Brest was claimed by ANXF as essential before attempting to maintain Quiberon Bay as a base. Bradley, of course, strained to do neither.[484]

Patton, who had permitted Wood's 4th Armored to turn eastward without capturing its key objectives when the enemy's defenses were unformed, and without replacing the armor with attacking infantry, gained ground but lost a chance at solving his own problems beyond the Seine.[485] Eisenhower, who had written to Montgomery in late July stressing the need to capture Brittany, and who, more than anyone, was in daily contact with and obviously superior to Bradley, had failed to stress the need to assure CHASTITY's implementation.

Eisenhower's failure to deal with this issue throughout the first three weeks of August also demonstrated his inability to balance Supreme Allied Command, American Theater Command, and his "'oversight" of the battlefield. CHASTITY's lingering silent death required major attention if either the Broad Front or

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whose protocol openly discouraged discussion of operations within another nation's operational sector. This practice would be a fatal flaw later in the campaign.

[484] *Outline Chronology of Notes*, ibid. Neither American Official History, *The Logistical Support of the Armies*, I, nor Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit* adequately explains the CHASTITY Plan and its variant supporting plans, BENEFICIARY, HANDS-UP, and SWORDHILT, nor the failure of Bradley and Patton to press for the capture of the ports, which they told SHAEF on 9 August would be secured "within a few days." Nor is the delay of the decision to cancel CHASTITY for one month into September by SHAEF explained. The complete chronology and excerpts of the issues and plans can be found only in the cited document prepared by the theater headquarters.

[485] Harold L. Mack, "The Critical Error of World War II," National Defense University: National Security Affairs Paper 81-1; (Defense Technical Information Center AD A097275), 4-12. Mack was the Chief of Movements for COMZ. He blames Bradley for failing to inform Patton. His unsubstantiated criticisms of Montgomery are typical of American staff officers passing on headquarters gossip and the jingoism that pervaded the American army. Most of this discussion is irrelevant to his topic.

concentrated thrust strategy was to be implemented and a continued offensive maintained. As Monty and Eisenhower met on 23 August, this had not been done.[486]

The logic of the situation, as graphicly portrayed by the planners in their forecast, was to immediately mount an attack to the northeast, to clear the coast and to capture the Seine ports simultaneous to an encirclement of Paris.[487] A full press to execute AXEHEAD, and the cancellation of air supply to mount airborne operations either to capture the Boulogne area (BOXER) or Tournai (TRANSFIGURE), mounted a considerable logistical threat to Bradley and his anxious charger, Patton. Executing either plan essentially would cancel Bradley's NORMANDY TO THE RHINE plan. These options posed a large problem to Eisenhower in his consideration of a rapid thrust to the northeast or two "equally" balanced thrusts eastward. SHAEF's planners were not the only logisticians seeing a problem with executing AXEHEAD in lieu of an operational and logistical pause. 21 Army Group's "Q" estimate for 17 August warned that a pursuit beyond the Seine might outstrip the ability to develop Le Havre and Rouen in time to support these operations, though the planners stressed the need to continue developing these ports as they would also affect the feeding of Paris and the future support of the Americans. More important to Montgomery's plans, the British estimate noted that the

> small channel ports in the area DIEPPE must be developed to the maximum . . . since in the event of a quick advance these will give us the only intake by sea until we reach ANTWERP-ROTTERDAM.

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[486] General Board Study No. 1, 21; *Outline Chronology of Notes*, 39; SHAEF considered weather considerations would require capture of Quiberon Bay by 1 October. Since Brest did not fall until 18 September, and no attacks had been made to complete the capture of Belle Island, the plan apparently was dropped "for the present."

[487] NARA, RG 331, Box 75, MAPS D+90 and D+120 to accompany Post-Neptune Planning Forecast No. 1, May 1944.

> Circumstances will decide whether BOULOGNE and CALAIS are opened.[488]

The same estimate stressed that the Americans would continue to need a 2,000-ton daily air transport of supplies. The satisfactory fact for the future, however, was that following the opening of Le Havre, the British would be able to operate without over-the-beach maintenance, a benefit that would subdue the weather risk plus provide shorter lines of communication for the advancing Army Group. This, of course, presumed Le Havre was not handed over to the Americans, which was SHAEF's intent to make up for Bradley's failure to develop his own ports.[489]

The "Q" appreciation of 21 Army Group recommending the location of the Army Group's maintenance beyond the Seine stressed the operational situation of the enemy following their escape from the Alencon-Argentan Gap. Stating that the enemy, unable to reform a defensive line, would be pursued, and noting the benefits that an American advance offered, the appreciation stated:

> We must ensure that the pursuit of the retreating enemy by the British and Canadian armies shows an equal disregard for maintenance limitations.

Stating that continuing a pursuit and its maintenance beyond the Seine was the sole problem for the British forces, it outlined possible courses of action.[490] These were soon finalized.

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[488] "Liberation Campaign," 35, quoting Q Plans 21 A Gp WD Aug 44 Appx H, Q Plans of 17 Aug 44 HS/WD/NWE/9/1.H

[489] Ibid.

[490] Ibid., Q Appreciation, 21 August, 21 A Gp/5552/9/Q.

21 Army Group's long-term plan for logistics was issued on 22 August. the day of the Eisenhower-De Guingand meeting. It outlined a four-stage plan for the development of the area east of the Seine as the British advanced base—in the area of Le Havre, Rouen, and Dieppe. The Seine ports, it assumed, would always be needed—if not for British operations, then to support the feeding of Paris and for the support of American operations. Assuming that the Canadian Army would operate on the Army Group's left, clearing the coastal sector with two corps, while the Second Army operated toward Amiens with the American 12th Army Group to its right, the plan additionally theorized an advance towards the Somme. For this operation, it stipulated road maintenance beyond the Seine but rail and road maintenance up to the Seine during Stage 1. Stage 2 would require the capture a port for maintenance, probably Dieppe, while Dempsey's army continued to be based on the rear maintenance area. During Stage 3 following the capture of Le Havre and the minor Seine ports, the forward base would be stocked and the development of forward ports such as Rouen and Fecamp would begin. Stage 4 would see the transition from the Normandy rear base to sole supply from the advanced base as stocks were "eaten down."[491]

Significantly absent from any "Q" appreciation at this juncture is the port of Antwerp. The planning for TALISMAN (renamed ECLIPSE), concerning a complete collapse of the enemy and a subsequent rush into Germany by the Allies, named Rotterdam and Hamburg as the key logistical bases for the 21 Army Group.[492]

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[491] NAC, RG 24, Volume D63, File "OP PLANS", 21 A Gp/5541/2/Q(Plans), 22 Aug 44, Development of British Advance Base EAST of the SEINE, 1-4.

[492] Ibid.

Antwerp, however, was not yet seen as essential for a British advance, though it is doubtful that 21 Army Group's MGA (Major General, Administration), had yet been advised of Montgomery's plan for a thrust deep into the Ruhr and beyond.

On the Allied right, the Americans were advancing away from their ports and were not due to see sustenance delivered from either Antwerp (D+240 capture) or the Riviera ports for an extended period. Nor were these ports within the realm of operational planning on 22 August. The Americans had not abandoned their pre-NEPTUNE logistics plan, nor had significant operational guidance focused logistical planning for specific maneuvers. The broadest and most undefined of "fronts," the phase-lines periodically issued by the G-3 forecast, appeared to be the only guidance for internal planning by SHAEF.[493]

"Forecasts" by Eisenhower's plans staff provided "a basis for calculating future requirements." Beginning in May, the planners periodically circulated these among plans staffs at SHAEF, AEAF, and ANXF, but did not apparently send them "downward" to the Army Groups. At various times, instructions concerning these included:

> [C]opies of this forecast must not be distributed officially outside the headquarters of ANXF, SHAEF, or AEAF; nor must it be quoted officially in correspondence.

Such comments accented the theoretical nature of the work. The G-3, in a memo to the Chief of Staff concerning a request for a forecast by the British Chiefs of Staff, cautioned,

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[493] NARA, RG 331, SHAEF Post Overlord Forecasts, Plans 370-32, SHAEF/18008/1/Ops, 15 April 44, Subject: Post-'NEPTUNE' Planning Staff Forecast.

> In a matter of this kind the answers will be largely guess-work, but an attempt has been made by the planners to produce what they consider to be a reasonable guess.[494]

The forecasts, however, provide an accurate barometer of SHAEF's assessments at different periods and a reflection of what Eisenhower had been briefed.

Besides the phase-lines that had come to shape impressions of success and failure, the forecasts also included summary statements concerning key issues or problems as seen by SHAEF or as reported by the lower headquarters. With the impending dissolution of AEAF and the lesser role of ANXF, these forecasts most likely became the planners' soliloquies—their own version of reality.

By the time of the Eisenhower-Montgomery meeting, these estimates had been obsolete for a month. The last forecast, No. 1, had been introduced by a memo pointing out that:

> At D+270 an offensive will be launched NORTH of the ARDENNES with the object of capturing the RUHR. A subsidiary offensive will be launched at the same time SOUTH of the ARDENNES towards the METZ GAP. It can be taken that by D+360, 'RANKIN' 'C' conditions will have arisen.[495]

Unknown to Eisenhower during his discussions with Montgomery, the DRAGOON forces would reach—on their D+30 (14 September)—the position they had forecast for DRAGOON D+120. The DRAGOON forces had rapidly captured Toulon and Marseille and were able to close their over-the-beach support operations by mid-September. Being the beneficiaries of a full four-week acceleration in port

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[494] Ibid., SHAEF/18008/1/Plans, 27th May 1944, Post-'NEPTUNE' Planning Forecast No. 1; SHAEF/18008/1/Plans, GCT 370-32 Plans, Memorandum, 27 August 1944, Forecast of Progress-Operation 'OVERLORD.'

clearance, plus exceeding over-the-beach forecasts and an expanded minor harbor plan, the DRAGOON forces were granted a logistical support capability that was not challenged by the shipping allotted to that part of the front.

DRAGOON should have been a major consideration in Eisenhower's estimates; characteristically, it was not. Rather than seeing the Southern France landings and the Riviera ports as assets, he saw them as Wilson's problem until handed over to SHAEF, thus maintaining an overly strict adherence to coalition protocol and lines of responsibility. Mentally, there seemed to be a barrier for Eisenhower to seeing the unfolding campaign. Southern France was not a part of Eisenhower's maneuver plans except to link up at an unforecast future date. The logistical implications of absorbing the Southern France force seemed farther still.[496]

At day's end, Eisenhower seemed to have three choices: to support a single line of operations until logistics were improved by port clearance and capture, to disperse his resources until his advance petered out due to lack of maintenance, or to order an operational pause as foreseen by the planners. Having ruled out a pause, he was left with Monty's proposal for a concentrated thrust or that of his staff to advance on a broad front.

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[495] Ibid., SHAEF/18008/1/Ops Post-'NEPTUNE' Planning Forecast, 9 May 1944. RANKIN was a contingency plan for troop movement in the case of German surrender. This later was replaced by TALISMAN and eventually, late in the war, ECLIPSE.

[496] Ruppethal, *Logistical Support*, I, 28, 29, 117, 118; Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, Chapter XI, 576, Table 1; Wilson, *Report by SACMED*, 38-47. Eisenhower first communicates his ideas to his commanders regarding Southern France about this time, and in SCAEF 67, 22 August. Of significant importance is the fact that the Southern France ports outproduced Antwerp whenever convoys supported landing supplies. This poses a significant question as to whether the southern ports and not Antwerp should have been considered the prime supplier for Third Army, a decision that would have given Patton a one-month jump on adequate supplies during the fall campaign. Moreover, it calls the question on the true result of stripping the Mediterranean of naval resources to favor a Pacific advance by the Americans.

Logistics, the dominating force of strategy, momentarily took a rear seat to the strategic and operational picture as it appeared toward August's end. "Victory Disease" dominated the Allied councils of war. The rapid pace of operations during August led to the destruction of both the German Seventh Army and the successor of Panzer Group West, the Fifth Panzer Army. The resulting intelligence picture, estimated at every level of senior command, fostered an assurance that old plans or new should be implemented immediately to complete the victory achieved in Normandy, apparently regardless of logistical shortfalls.

The highest command echelons trumpeted victory in more strident tones than the field headquarters still fighting the battles. The Joint Intelligence Committee, who acted as the all-source integrator for the Allied high command, predicted on 14 August that military defeat Germany would occur before the end of 1944, continuing a trend of strategic optimism that grew with each report until fall. [497]

SHAEF's Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 22, for the week ending 19 August, summarized the effect of the great turning movement leaving only the Seine as an escape route for the remaining German divisions facing the 21 and 12th Army Group. More than 200,000 men were lost by the enemy and an additional 75,000 men were trapped in Brittany and the Channel Islands—60 percent of the total force in the West. Intelligence estimated that the enemy had committed about 1,700 tanks to

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[497] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 366, 367; John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, V*, August 1943-September 1944 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 396-403.

battle, 700 of which were now destroyed; perhaps only 600 of the remaining 1.000 were believed to be "runners."[498]

SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 23 offered a more dramatic proof of a favorable situation, not simply in the map graphics of a tighter pocket of enemy trapped against the Seine, but with representations of a general withdrawal from the south and southeast of France. The final word given on enemy capabilities was unadorned:

> The August battles have done it; the German Army in the West has had it. . . . [T]he armies of Rundstedt, of Kluge, and . . . of Model, are committed willy-nilly to what must shortly be the total surrender of more than two-thirds of FRANCE. . . . Two and a half months of bitter fighting . . . have brought the end of the war in EUROPE within sight, almost within reach. The strength of the German Army in the WEST has been shattered, PARIS belongs to FRANCE again, and the Allied Armies are streaming towards the frontiers of the Reich.[499]

Victory disease was not merely an intelligence phenomenon. Eisenhower enumerated the enemy losses in a special message to the Combined Chiefs, not only as another confirmation of his own supreme command, but also feeding the impression that the enemy had been defeated in the field.[500] Witnessing the enemy destruction, the American press—distracted from their blame and critique of the "stalemate" and "British dominance of Eisenhower"—now were keen to feed their readers unadorned claims of impending enemy collapse. The sources of these ideas were, of course, the army press camps. Bradley had told his court correspondents about the great psychological damage a penetration of the German border would

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[498] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 22, 3, 14.

[499] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 23, 4; Enemy Order of Battle in the West, 25 August 1944 (map).

have—setting the scene for his own planned thrust. SHAEF's correspondents began reporting victory. Universal euphoria seemed rampant in the Allied camp, even though Eisenhower appeared to attempt to mute this subject in his own dealings with the press.[501]

Prior to D-Day, an internal SHAEF study noted that the Germans could not hope for a victory over the Allies, but might hope that war weariness or dissension among Allies might grant a compromise agreement. Summing up, it noted:

> In any event the Nazi leaders must realize that for them there can be no hope of survival under any peace terms. For them, their position of power, indeed their very existence, would depend on GERMANY being able to stave off final defeat for as long as possible. Thus German policy could have only one object-to prolong the war and inflict maximum damage on the Allies.[502]

SHAEF intelligence, however, had not appreciated two eventualities: that the Germans would base their defense forward in Normandy and not fight a classic withdrawal along successive defense lines, and that Hitler's own generals would attempt a coup based upon assassinating the Fuhrer. The first had seen the near destruction of the German Army in the West, but had left the Allied armies without an adequate maintenance posture to mount a final offensive into the vitals of the Reich. The second, while commented upon at the highest levels, brought no serious consideration that Germany would self-destruct based on the leadership crisis at hand.

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[500] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2102-2104.

[501] With the exception of Patton, whose frequent fulminations are not food for supportable analysis on the subject, no Allied general either predicted the time needed to finish the victory or ventured any date for victory, knowing full well that they would have to deliver on such "promises." The general belief among Allied generals seemed to be that victory was achievable in 1944 or shortly after the new year.

[502] NARA, RG 331, Entry 22, Box 168, "JIC Correspondence," SHAEF/CIS/102/INT, SHAEF Combined Intelligence Staff, Appreciation No. 3, 4th April 1944, 1, 2.

Hitler and his decisions, one source noted, were a benefit to the Allied war effort. Killing him might strengthen the German military's ability to defend its borders.[503]

Thus, defeating the remainder of the German Army in the West would be critical. The Luftwaffe had been crippled by the air battles of 1944; the U-Boat "scourge" that had frightened Churchill had been eliminated; the 1,000-mile Eastern Front still "fixed" the bulk of the German Army to prevent an invasion by the Red Army, a crucial factor in maintaining a favorable force-ratio in the West. A ground thrust in the West penetrating into the industrial heart of Germany would eliminate the German industrial ability to support the war and might end the war quickly. Equally important, the German Army in the West, unable to abandon either the industrial or population bases of their own homeland, would be brought to battle and destroyed by the temporarily superior Allied armies.

Time, of course, was the major issue. A decisive force, able to destroy the German Army in the west as well as its industrial base in short order, was necessary. With the demonstrated German ability to rebuild units, to tap the huge unused potential of the young, the old, and slave labor, and the continued ability for dispersed industries to amass new weapons, the strength differential of the Allies would evaporate with time. Where and how to aim and concentrate a decisive blow or blows was the basic argument brewing between Eisenhower and Montgomery, but more accurately, between the Americans and the British.[504] Fed by the victory disease

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[503] SHAEF Intelligence Summary, No. 22 for week ending 19 August 1944, 6; 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 158, 27 August 1944, 2.

[504] SHAEF's planning staff had selected the most acceptable option, one which permitted the Americans, namely Bradley, to operate "independently," a policy that had been underscored by Stimson, Marshall, Bradley and, despite his "Allied" hat, Eisenhower. While, Montgomery had

rampant in Washington, in London, at SHAEF and, to a degree, within the Army Groups, the validity of the strategy adopted—and the operational design that would spring therefrom—should have been the controlling factor in any military decision taken.

SHAEF's Broad Front strategy paper had named two objectives: the RUHR and the SAAR, each behind one of the two best "gateways" into Germany. Each was named the objective of the national Army Group facing that sector. The Planning Staff, however, had masked key considerations, ignored significant military and economic facts, and oversimplified the geographical factors involved.

SHAEF's Combined Intelligence Staff (CIS—later renamed Joint Intelligence Committee, SHAEF), was chartered to "keep under constant review the military and political situation in the area for which SCAEF is responsible." Producing military appreciations, the committee had representation from each nation, service, and special section, as well as from the political advisers. It had a coordinate relationship with the War Office JIC, which provided its own appreciations to SHAEF.[505] A primary producer of appreciations used by the SHAEF G-2 for his own reports and Weekly Intelligence Summary, it would have also been a key source for the Joint Plans Staff (JPS) that produced "Broad Front."

The Combined Chiefs had named the heart of Germany as SHAEF's objective; the Joint Plans Staff had expanded this to the Ruhr and the Saar. This varied,

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proposed the alternative plan, the concentrated thrust was embraced by both Alanbrooke and Churchill in turn, the British COS Committee, and the War Cabinet. The argument went beyond personalities—it was political. It seemed to have less to do with ending the war than showing who was in charge and could get credit for winning the war.

however, from the critical CIS Appreciation No. 3 that predated the Broad Front study and which was heavily drawn upon by the Joint Planners, who reproduced significant portions of the appreciation within their own Broad Front study. The Combined Intelligence Staff had noted two economic areas of primary importance: Berlin-Leipzig-Dresden-Magdeburg (also noted as the political center of the country) and the Ruhr. Accepting, as the JPS would, that the Berlin area was too far to the East to affect SCAEF's conduct of a campaign in the west, the CIS instead balanced the Ruhr against other industrial areas in the west. Noting the importance of oil and rubber to the economy, the CIS estimated that the most accurate assessment could be derived by estimating capacity in steel and coal production.[506]

The percentage of production arrived at was estimated as:

	Crude Steel	Coal Production
RUHR	50 percent	38 percent (inc SE KOLN)
SAAR	5 percent	3 percent
NE FRANCE/ALSACE	11 percent	11 percent
BELGE/LUX	4 percent	7 percent
Rest of EUROPE	30 percent	43 percent

The economic analysis of the 36–40 million tons of crude steel produced annually and of annual production of the 296 million tons of hard coal stated these conclusions:

> [I]f GERMANY were to lose the RUHR (and consequently FRANCE and BELGIUM) she would lose 65 percent of her present total steel production.

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[505] NARA, RG 331, Entry 22, Box 168, 'JIC Papers,' JIC SHAEF (44) (Final), 8th July 1944, Directive to Joint Intelligence Committee SHAEF, Annex A.

[506] CIS Appreciation No. 3, 2.

> The loss of the RUHR . . . together with that of FRANCE and BELGIUM, would deprive GERMANY of 56 percent of her total coal production.[507]

The CIS identified another area of economic interest—the Middle Rhine (Coblenz-Frankfurt-Mannheim-Karlsruhe-Strasbourg). This area, it stressed, "is economically insignificant." Further, the staff noted that coal production mostly fed local uses, so the loss of the Ruhr would affect other areas less, but that the loss of steel would eliminate Germany's ability to support several military campaigns simultaneously. Thus:

> Failure to keep the RUHR in production would rapidly starve GERMANY of the means to continue the war.[508]

As the destruction of the German forces in the West had negated most of the forces estimated to remain following the capture of the lodgement, the more critical section in the CIS Appreciation (Part II, German Conduct of the Campaign in the West), that was still relevant in late August revolved around the topographic estimates. These included Northeastern France, the Low Countries, and Western Germany. Importantly, the CIS Appreciation contained a detailed set of maps and estimates that included the area within Western Germany.[509] (See figure 28.)

The Broad Front analysis highlighted the terrain prior to arriving at the "gaps" or gateways into Germany, but deleted the CIS analysis of the terrain within Germany—a critical error considering its import to planning for the campaign. This attitude is also reflected by the G-4 Plans phase lines. Not estimating that the armies

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[507] Ibid.

[508] Ibid.

[509] SHAEF CIS Appreciation No. 1, Part II, 22 April 1944, 2, Annexures A and C.

would be far into Germany prior to "Conditions of RANKIN 'C'" obtaining. the campaign to breach the border, not to fight the German Army within Germany. was emphasized. This is a major difference underlying the Broad Front and concentrated thrust strategies, despite the fact that they both listed as the object the destruction of the German Army and the capture of the Ruhr. Moreover, it was the terrain that not only permitted movement and determined logistics capabilities, but also granted the defense or attack an advantage, while presenting obstacles or granting avenues. It was the nature of the terrain that determined both the deployment and tactics of battle—the entire essence of operational design. Not seeing operations within Germany as part of the campaign's maneuver was a deployment issue that would have to be faced sooner than forecast, and was an issue Montgomery had addressed in his concept of operations, but which had not been examined by SHAEF's planners.[510] (See figure 30.)

The CIS appreciation examined the difficulties of the terrain north and south of the "gaps" examined and later accepted by the Joint Planners for Broad Front, concluding that:

> [F]rom the topographical point of view alone, it is extremely difficult to attack from the WEST on a large scale.

The CIS noted that even the two gaps had problems. In the north, the avenue of approach

> is roughly funnel shaped with the funnel formed by the ALBERT Canal and the MEUSE which narrow to form the neck between MAASTRICHT and LIEGE, EAST of which it is possible to debouch on to the RHINE Plain in the direction of the RUHR. Even this 'gap' has a series of defensive possibilities running NORTH-SOUTH across the PLAINE BRABANCONNE.

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[510] CIS Appreciation No. 3, Post-Neptune Administrative Appreciation.

Canals and rivers—the Dyle, the Meuse, the Dendre, the Senne, and eventually the Roer—of course, provided the obstacles.

> The "South Gap," likewise,
>
> is only relatively speaking a "gap." It too, is crossed by a succession of potential defensive lines running NORTH-SOUTH.

In addition to high plateaux, heavy woods would canalise any advance, with approaches carefully covered in depth by the Siegfried Line, which was termed "exceptionally strong"[511]

It was not until after Eisenhower made his campaign decision that significant terrain studies concerning Germany appeared in the American and SHAEF camps at the command level. 12th Army Group produced a 1:1,250,000 scale map entitled "Generalized Enemy Terrain" during the late fall, and beginning in November circulated terrain estimates for individual areas through the medium of Weekly Intelligence Summaries. Likewise, SHAEF published terrain analyses through its Weekly Summaries, leaving unanswered the question of how much the commanders knew prior to their original selection of the campaign's major direction.[512] (See figure 31.)

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[511] Ibid., CIS Appreciation, Part II, Appendices A, 1-2, B, C. It is significant that concerning the entire appreciation, the LONDON JIC assessed that far too little significance was given to the effect of the strategic bombing campaign, which, in their words, gave them "doubt[s] whether Germany would have the ability to fight a prolonged campaign in the West." See J.I.C./676/44, 8th May 1944, in accompanying file.

[512] *12th Army Group Report of Operations*, III, G-2 Section, Parts I-IV, 69-72. Maps are included as special studies. No studies were done of the "middle ground" between Normandy and the German border by 12th Army Group. This shows the relative dependence of the Army Group on terrain and special intelligence from theater levels. See index of studies, Plate I, also study "Generalized Enemy Terrain Central and Southern Germany," 1:1,250,000 both in map box accompanying Volume III. (Reproduced as figure 31.)

The British and Canadians worked more methodically. Extensive terrain analyses of the Channel Coast were done prior to D-Day. [513] It also must be stressed that Montgomery did hours of his own "terrain analysis" in his map trailer, was a veteran of campaigns fought in Northeastern France, Belgium, and Flanders, and had conducted many bicycle tours of the battlefields following the Great War. He was also an avid student of the military history of Britain's army, which campaigned in the sector in question in the early 1800s. Montgomery and his generals were familiar—from their own experiences as commanders and staff officers in the First World War—not only with the terrain but with the difficulties of weather and season peculiar to European campaigning.[514]

Eisenhower had helped author the American Battlefield Monuments Battlefield Guide while in Washington and later, while on leave from the Commission's Paris office, had driven from Paris to Brussels, to Bonn, to Coblenz, to Heidelberg, to Neustadt, to Zurich. This route circumscribes much of the geography in question, and though valuable as an impressionistic tour, it did not provide a detailed, systematic, military analysis of terrain avenues, water-courses, bridging, road conditions (save for the road traveled), or the major planning considerations for the deployment of forces. Moreover, he did not traverse any of the terrain avenues from west to east as his armies would have to fight. Bradley first entered Continental Europe on D-Day; he had no experience of the terrain.[515]

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[513] NAC, RG 24, ibid., Operation AXEHEAD files, March-August 44, are an example.

[514] Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General*, passim.

[515] Daniel D. Holt and James W. Leyerzapf, eds., *Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); map titled Route of Gruber-Eisenhower Motor Tour, August 28 to September 13, 1929 following 282.

While personal experience may have confirmed the ability to campaign in winter, conquer obstacles, and supply and move an army over limited tracks on sodden ground, what the impending strategy debate lacked was complete, honest analysis on the part of SHAEF. Naming the southern "gap" a secondary route neither adequately explained nor assessed the problems and gains from using this avenue. Even a cursory inspection of SHAEF's maps, deleted from the Broad Front study by the Joint Planners, who "borrowed" most other material from the CIS study, indicated that the southern route led not to adequate maneuver ground for deploying large forces, but to increasingly constrained approaches that possessed the same problems of the northern route but in larger scale and without any great military benefit. Moreover, as the economic estimates proved, the Saar was no great war-sustainer, nor was it the population base that the Ruhr and northern Germany were at this time in the war. Instead, it was a terrain black hole that, once fought through, exited onto further constricted avenues leading away from the Ruhr, and off to Berlin or to Czechoslavakia and Poland in Central Europe. (See figure 31.)

These terrain avenues were the Kaiserslautern "Approach," no real avenue but a cut through the woods between the Hardt and Pfalz Hills that led to the Rhine plain, a narrow lowland running from Basel northward to Frankfurt, a lateral obstacle and a narrow trench-like avenue which debouched in the Frankfurt area. Frankfurt canalizes movement and is sided by the Odenwald to the south, the Spessart Mountains to the east, the Vogelsberg to the northeast, and the Taunus Mountains to the northwest. Small corridors, the Fulda and Wetterau, climb through the foothills of the Vogelsberg and Taunus mountains. Passing the Ruhr far to the east north of Kassel, a debouching

force would find its rear flanked by the Rotharbirge and, farther north, the Teutoburgerwald. To the northeast lay the Harz Mountains. These "corridors" share similar characteristics: they are watered, lowland areas that would cramp two deployed divisions, and until the Hessian hills are gained north of the Hohe Rhon, maneuver room for two or more corps is not found. This is excellent defensive terrain, with narrow mobility corridors that are easily blocked, flanked, obstacled, and prone to poor off-road movement in wet weather.[516]

Thus, besides aiming a large part of the American forces at a secondary objective—the "economically insignificant Rhine cities"—after fighting for the Saarland, the southern "gap" funneled the American forces into constricted terrain that would hamper their deployment against the major stated objective, the Ruhr, and should the Red Army be held by the Germans, the western approach to Berlin, a contingency that never should have been eliminated by SHAEF's planners. Moreover, the southern approach granted the enemy time by permitting a defense on terrain that was not operationally decisive to ending the war quickly.

The Northern Plain of Germany offered the best avenue for large unit movement; it was heavily roaded, led directly across the Ruhr's northern cities, and continued on to Berlin. The most extensive rail network in Germany was located in this area. This approach was flat but laced with water obstacles, and off-road movement would have been hampered in heavy rain or the late fall. Winter would

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[516] NARA, RG 407, ML 206, Box 24143, ML 206. The author's analysis is based on 12th Army Group Map study, "Generalized Enemy Terrain, Nov 44" attached to ML 206, "Estimate of the Situation: Major Effort in the Koln Plain, 30 Nov 44" and personal inspection of the ground (Reproduced as figure 31). The author has extensive military experience concerning this area. He served as a war plans officer at Central Army Group, NATO, 1987-1990, and served in armored cavalry units in the Fulda-

offer better movement once the ground was frozen. The open terrain lent itself to aerial observation, and hence made it difficult for the enemy to establish defense lines until late fall brought poor flight conditions. The approach on the Dutch-German border had the benefit of bypassing the Siegfried Line Defences, once the former Dutch defenses of the Grebbe Line (prewar "Fortress Holland") and the Belgian defenses of the Albert Canal and Meuse were captured. In late August 1944, this was the optimum maneuver approach for both concentration and speed of advance, for perhaps 60 days, as November and December would begin to minimize its advantages—a condition that would prevail until spring.[517]

Given the terrain and the influence of logistics, a detailed correlation of forces would have added immeasureably to the debate. On 23 August, the day of the Eisenhower-Montgomery meeting, the following division-sized forces were available to SHAEF in the approximate locations:

21 Army Group (Montgomery) (17+3)* Northwest Europe: Seine River/Normandy.

Armoured Divisions: Gds, 7th, 11th, 79th, 4th CDN, 1st Pol.

Infantry Divisions: 3d, 15th, 43d, 49th, 50th, 51st, 53d, 59th, 2d CDN, 3d CDN.

Airborne Divisions: 6th

Armoured Brigades: 4th, 8th, 27th, 31st Tank, 33d, 34th Tank, 6th Gds, 2d CDN.

Frankfurt corridors. 1977-1980 and 1985-1987. The "two-corps" estimate is based on frontages for World War II corps.

[517] 2 Army Intelligence Summary No. 92, 4 Sep 44, 2,3, 6-9, Map App. E.; Summary No. 93, 5 Sep 44, Map App B; Summary No. 101, 13 Sep 44, App A. Geographically, this "approach" is the widest flat approach across northwestern Europe and extends as far as the Urals, hence the Eastern Approaches to Berlin. The best appreciation of this ground in NOT found in SHAEF files, but in open-source material during the Cold War. For examples, see Hugh Faringdon, *Confrontation: The Strategic Geography of NATO and the Warsaw Pact* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), passim; and Hugh Faringdon, *Strategic Geography: NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the Superpowers*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1989), passim. The SHAEF map collection in NARA is badly organized and incomplete. It has terrain studies for this area in 1945, but none earlier.

Independent Bdes: Special Air Service. 1st Belgian Inf. Royal Netherands.

12th Army Group (Bradley) (21) Northwest Europe: Seine, Brittany. Normandy.

Armored Divisions: 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 2d FR.

Infantry Divisions: 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 35th, 79th, 80th, 83d, 90th,

SHAEF (Reserve) (5+1 'equivalent'): England

First Allied Airborne Army:

Airborne Divisions: 1 BR., 17th,** 82d, 101st

Airlanding Divisions: 52d Lowland

Brigades: 1st Pol.

*These brigades contained enough tanks to be considered tank-only equivalents of an armored division. Given army artillery and other independent infantry units, a conservative estimate would be that they would equate to 3-5 division equivalents.

**In theater but not considered operationally ready until 15 September.

Divisions undeployed (ETOUSA) in theater:

94th, 95th, 17th Airborne,** 9th Armd,**

*arrived in theater before 30 August 44. Additionally, the force "follow-on" in forces actually deployed included in divisions: 5 arrivals in September, 9 in October, 4 in November, 2 in December. The planners estimated a 30-day period was required to make divisions operational from time of arrival in theater.[518]

6th Army Group (Devers) under AFHQ, Mediterranean until date to be determined, expected to be no later 30 September/South of France: Montelimar-Grenoble. This force was available for planning purposes only:

Armored Divisions: 1st FR

Infantry Divisions: 3d, 36th, 45th, 1st FR, 3d Algerian, 9th Colonial.

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[518] CARL. Army Operational Research Group Report Memorandum No. E.20, "Some Statistics of the North West Europe Campaign June 1944 to May 1945," 2-3, notes the following strengths for 31 August 1944: 12th Army Group, 613,00 men; 21 Army Group, 537,000.

Airborne Divisions: 1st Airborne Task Force[519]

Eisenhower then had 37 divisions on the continent, the equivalent tank strength (British only) of no less than three more, the airborne equivalent of six more in England, the expected arrival within a week of four more to be operational by 1 October, and a force of eight divisions to be transferred upon mutual agreement of the Supreme Commanders, whose ultimate operational plan would be decided by SHAEF.

Arrayed against this growing force, which would increase until the following spring, was a retreating enemy whose strength in the west was determined (by SHAEF's estimate) to be the equivalent of seven panzer and 13 infantry divisions, west of the Seine and north of the Loire. Within days, SHAEF's evolving estimates placed the strength at 33 divisions on the entire western front, including the scattered remnants of eight panzer, eight infantry, and one para division in the 21 Army Group sector. Nine divisions were arrayed along the Channel Coast, reaching to the Zuider Zee.[520] Within three days of the meeting, the G-2 of the 21 Army Group would estimate that the enemy had suffered approximately 400,000 casualties in killed, wounded, captured, or penned in the coastal ports and a loss of approximately 1,500 tanks of the 1,700 estimated to have be deployed.[521] As the toll of prisoners, destroyed

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[519] EL, SHAEF G-3, WAR Room Summary, No. 78, 23 August 1944; Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies, II*, Table 8-Divisional Buildup in the European Theater, 282-283; Wilson, *Report by SACMED*, 34-40; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I*, Appendix IV, 521-532. American infantry divisions would also add the equivalent of one tank battalion and one tank destroyer battalion per division, normally from the Army Group "pool." These in equivalent strength would have doubled the armored divisions assigned to Bradley's forces in total number of tanks/armored tank-killers.

[520] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary, No. 22, 19 August 1944, 3; No. 23, 26 August 1944, 2-3; Order of Battle Map, "Enemy Order of Battle in the West as at 25 August 1944." Though this map is for three days after the meeting, there was little change in known enemy dispositions during the interval period.

[521] 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary, No. 158, 27 August 1944, 1; Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1963, 1984), 5. The American

or abandoned vehicles, and enemy units attacked by strafing increased. these figures would only become better for the Allies for the immediate future. The German Army. short of the West Wall, was seen as teetering and decimated.

Military plans are based upon universal elements that, while named, formatted, or sometimes subdivided into several subelements, all must be considered to translate a plan into an operational order. These are: Assumptions, Situation, Intelligence. Mission or Task, Intentions, Concept of Operations or Method, Administration and Logistics, and Command and Control. Planners update these to meet changes and convert the "plan" into a directive or order prior to its implementation. At lowest levels, the "plan" minus the assumptions equals the actual order, as that which was "assumed" now is replaced by the situation as known.[522]

Montgomery, as a didactic, ex-staff college instructor, was renowned for his ability both to dissect and distill situations and to explain them in directives accounting for these elements. The "appreciation" (British) or "estimate of the situation" (US) was an inseparable component of his basic intellectual processes. Eisenhower, the staff officer, trusted the staff estimate, and as he became a senior commander and found less time to analyze, tended to support staff recommendations. Moreover, as an "overall commander," he was responsible to direct and coordinate,

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official historian, Charles MacDonald, estimated Allied superiority at 20:1 in tanks, 2.5:1 in artillery, and total air superiority as belonging to the Allies.

[522] Both American and British "orders" consisted of these elements but under different names. The above description attempts to harmonize the titles of the subelements.

not to command and execute specific forces or operations. The "how" of things he left to others.[523]

Montgomery questioned all analysis until he had mentally "erased the board" and reconstructed it ruthlessly. Moreover, he merged his intentions with his methods, essentially cutting the cloth to fit his coat, a practice ingrained in men who have the responsibility of executing their own plans. The SHAEF estimates ignored method below the thin tissue combining strategy with operational design, thus selecting an "object" and avenue and leaving the mechanics or even broad concepts for conduct of the campaign to others, even when these methods were neither optimal nor practical.[524]

The situation under discussion on 23 August reflected two realities. The first was a decision relying upon an estimate and courses of action based on assumptions totally irrelevant to the actual situation as known and remaining secret to anyone but the SHAEF planners and senior staff. Against this was judged a proposed course of action based upon a sound but risky appreciation independently derived from the situation as known. The 23 August meeting, however, went further. In legal terms, Montgomery was forced to defend himself against evidence he was never allowed to

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[523] Eisenhower once bitterly criticized an attempt to compare him with commanders who were not "overall operational commanders," i.e., Supreme Commanders. He used this comment on different occasions concerning both Patton and Montgomery, who did not have to "take into account all factors."

[524] SHAEF's belief in a single, unremitting, determined drive into the heart of nine panzer divisions and hundreds of antitank guns as the simple "breakout in the east solution" in Normandy is a case in point. SHAEF never followed Ludendorff's dictum, "A strategical plan which ignores the tactical factor is foredoomed to failure." See Erich von Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story*, II (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), 221. While Ludendorff did not prove to be a successful practitioner of his own theories, his idea nevertheless is correct.

see and which could only be known after it was used in a trial whose verdict was predetermined.

Examining SHAEF's assumptions, had he been given the "Broad Front paper," Montgomery would have been justified to attack the following assumptions:

"The main deduction" of the Allies' not having a disparity in forces for an extended period and that it might be eight months after D-Day before a superiority of divisions in the field could be achieved was, in fact, nonsensical at August's end. Few formations directly in front of the Allies were up to strength, but then became the cadre for rebuilt formations, a state of affairs that could only have been prevented if Germany were penetrated en masse and a final decisive battle fought while the Army in the west was weak and disorganized.

The Joint Planners had argued against

> a line of advance which leads us to a head-on collision with the main GERMAN forces without opportunity for maneuver[525]

While the weakened state of German forces negated the requirement to avoid "head-on collision" of forces, Montgomery's concentrated blow did provide for tactical maneuver, as some units fronting the enemy would obviously be on the flanks of the enemy who was penetrated, or opposed by an enemy in many cases unable to form cohesive defense lines. Moreover, the operational threat to both the southern "gap" via Metz-Saarbrucken, and the Rhine plain east of the Vosges through the Belfort Gap, would be made possible by the DRAGOON forces of 6th Army Group allowed for in the Montgomery concept. That SHAEF's plans had not assigned a

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[525]Post Overlord Courses of Action, 2.

theoretical mission for DRAGOON, based on the idea that the advance on Metz was theorized by SHAEF as taking place after D+270, is remarkable.

The SHAEF planners decried a concentrated advance as confining the Allies to a "narrow front," devoid of surprise and maneuver, leaving the advance open to flank counterattacks and permitting the Southern France German formations to escape.[526] Montgomery's concept allowed for complementary operations by the 6th Army Group; moreover, Eisenhower did have the opportunity to form a mobile task force, an armored corps, to link with the Seventh Army, while retaining Patton's Army for the northeastward thrust. This corps, ideally, would then be attached to Seventh Army, its forces and logistics then being centered on the Riviera ports. This mission was accounted for by the SHAEF Joint Planners, who noted that

> a subsidiary operation of this type would be of value if it could be carried out without diverting forces from our main advance.[527]

Rather than being "irretrievably committed" to one "gap," the operations of the 6th Army Group would logically be the force on the obviously subsidiary "gap," not the much stronger 12th Army Group, as desired by Bradley. This is a key point; assigning the 6th Army Group as the subsidiary advance retains some semblance of a "mutually supporting axis," as was most desired by SHAEF, but proportions it to meet

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[526] Ibid., 6.

[527] Ibid., 5; *Seventh Army Report of Operations*, II, 335-357. It must be noted that Patton was, in fact, ordered to hand over the XV Corps in late September, with the 2d French Armored Division, the 79th Infantry Division, and the 106th Cavalry Group (Mechanized).

its subsidiary role. not off-balancing the attack by assigning a larger force to the stated secondary attack.[528]

The "Ardennes" sector that creates the broad front, and not dual thrusts, was not ignored by the Montgomery plan. Montgomery's plan implies a blocking force within the Ardennes, as the Rhine Plain as far south as Cologne (Koln) would be assaulted and the tactics of his extended flank would be handled by the American Army Commander, not specified by the 21 Army Group Commander. At any rate, the Roer River approaches would require some force to block as far south as the Monschau Corridor in the Ardennes-Eifel area, and lateral communications along the Liege-Luxembourg line most likely would have been permitted as foreseen by the Joint Planners if 6th Army Group maintained the southern axis.[529]

But not every deduction or statement made by the planners would have been contested by Montgomery—only their context. For example, their statement of operational policy, congruent with the basis for his own proposal, retains almost prophetical irony for those who opposed him, and it therefore deserves reiteration:

> Our object must be to force the enemy to fight on ground favourable to armoured forces and in front of areas where communications offer suitable targets for our superior airpower. After every such action we should use our air and armoured forces to harass the enemy's retreat and give him no time to reform, at the same time using our airborne forces to facilitate the crossing of rivers and other natural obstacles.

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[528] SHAEF War Room Daily Summary No. 78, 23 August, lists Patton's Third Army with four corps, and seven infantry and four armored divisions. The Seventh US Army then possessed only the VI Corps of three infantry divisions.

[529] Post Overlord Courses of Action, 7. Note that this would also alleviate logistical problems by "dropping off" infantry divisions to block the mid-Rhineland area. These could be maintained by reduced logistical scales.

> Our amphibious forces should be used to contain the enemy's coastal garrisons[530]

To Eisenhower, the Broad Front plan did retain some elements of Montgomery's concerns, though the planners' primary belief proved the unraveling of their logic,

> the assumption that the GERMANS will contest our advance right up to the frontiers of GERMANY.[531]

The completely different situation should have caused a new evaluation by the SHAEF Joint Planners. None was forthcoming. Just as SHAEF had no answer for the forward defense chosen by the Germans, they failed to see options to seize opportunity. Eisenhower believed, falsely, that moving forward the previously decided upon strategy filled this vacuum, and that, in retrospect, he had not varied from SHAEF's master plan. His decision, however, did not stifle dissent with the choice, dissent fired by the fact that key elements had not been solved even by moving up the original Broad Front advance. The logistical support of the armies and tactical air forces had not been addressed, nor did Eisenhower accept or seem to understand the operational difference between his choice and the alternative. It was the essence of the difference that plagued Ike's decision and caused Montgomery to extend the decision into a debate.

The conceptual differences underscored the nature of Eisenhower's generalship versus Montgomery's. Montgomery's followed a defined operational view

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[530] Post Overlord Courses of Action, Section II, 2-3.

[531] Ibid., 1.

that embodied the components of operational art and the more simplified "principles of war" accepted by both nations.[532]

Montgomery had defined both an operational objective (the destruction of the German army) and the geo-economic-political objective stipulated by the SHAEF analysis (the Ruhr), and provided for a sequenced operational maneuver or threat, an advance toward Berlin. The principles of Maintenance of the Objective, Offensive Action, Concentration, Mobility, and Cooperation were all incorporated into his plan. Moreover, Montgomery's plan followed US operational doctrine concerning the "main effort" for which the northern approach was to be designated by Eisenhower. The main attack or main effort, by the American text book definition, was:

> [a]ttack into which the commander throws the full weight of the offensive power at his disposal; attack directed at the chief objective of the campaign or battle; main effort.[533]

Reading further in the American textbook, the secondary effort (which Bradley was to command under Broad Front) was, in fact, listed as "a holding attack":

> Supporting attack made to hold the enemy in check, divert his attention from the main attacking force, and prevent his reinforcing his troops

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[532] While the term "operational art" did not exist in western manuals in 1944, Montgomery both understood and had practiced its elements. In November 1944 he published his ideas concerning "the art of war," entitled *Some Notes on the Conduct of War* and in December, reissued *Some Notes on the Use of Air Power in Support of Land Operations and Direct Air Support*, a veritable catechism for air-land battle operations. Both were published by 21 Army Group as pamphlets based on his earlier Eighth Army pamphlets. Both the United States and the Commonwealth had accepted "doctrine" concerning operations. These were both expressed in each nation's *Field Service Regulations*, and both nations published a "higher formations" manual: for the United States, FM 100-15; for the United Kingdom, F.S.R. Volume III.

[533] Dictionary of US Army Terms, 162; US Army, FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations* [hereafter referred to as FM100-5, 1944] (Washington: War Department, 15 June 1944), 110, 111. John I. Alger, *The Quest For Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (London: Greenwood Press, 1967). The appendix lists a complete chronological list showing the development and terminology of the principles by nation. See also, pages 240, 241, 244, 247, 249-251.

along the line of the main attack; containing attack; secondary attack.[534]

An abbreviated appreciation for 22 August would have recognized the following factors in the shorthand used by planners: (See figure 29.)

Aim: Capture of the Ruhr and the Destruction of the German Army In the West

Courses of Action:

1. A single concentrated thrust using the preponderance of 12 and 21 Army Groups with its left flank on the Channel and its right on the Axis AACHEN-COLOGNE to seize the Ruhr, destroy enemy forces in sector, and to prepare for future operations on the Axis RUHR-BERLIN.
2. A dual thrust using 21 Army Group in the north on the Axis LIEGE-`AACHEN-RUHR to seize the RUHR and 12th Army Group on the Axis METZ-SAARBRUCKEN-MANNHEIM.
3. A dual thrust using 21 Army Group to seize the Channel Coast and ANTWERP, and to protect the northern flank of the MAIN EFFORT via METZ-SAARBRUCKEN-FRANKFURT-RUHR.

Discussion:

Course of Action 1:

Can achieve operational decision by destroying enemy forces and strategic object of capture of the Ruhr directly.

Concentrates superior air and ground forces on the most direct avenue and on a specified axis.

Takes advantage of the best avenue both to the Ruhr and beyond for further operations.

Concentrates all armor on best armor approaches.

Moves towards supply ports and permits full use of one army to capture ports.

Directly threatens the V.1/V.2 Rocket/Missile launching sites.

Permits complementary operations of two army groups.

Permits formation of an operational reserve from units temporarily grounded or not immediately needed within the axis of advance.

In range for use of Allied Airborne Army.

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[534] *Dictionary of US Army Terms*, 136.

In range of U.K. based aircraft.

Abandons operational surprise once launched except by use of grouping or airborne forces.

Concentrates enemy defense area.

Course of Action 2:

Permits maximum use of forces on widest frontage to stretch enemy defense.

Permits varying of maneuver between axes.

Moves away from ports (Normandy) but closer to ANTWERP-MARSEILLES.

Forms Cohesive Front to enemy.

Uses all available avenues.

Stretches own combat power and disperses forces on divergent axes.

Disperses armored forces.

Abandons superiority of forces.

Will eventually "beach" all forces due to lack of maintenance before achieving final object.

Requires phased attacks due to logistics and operational pause of several months.

Does not achieve operational and strategic object in shortest amount of time---protracts the campaign.

Course of Action 3:

Gives largest flank and frontage (Channel to Antwerp to Ardennes) to second-smallest Army Group.

Does not develop best avenue of approach.

Does not take advantage of 6th Army Group as they are masked from adequate avenues into German border and beyond.

Concentrates bulk of forces in worst airfield country.

Reduces two-thirds of ground force to objectives that cannot achieve operational decision.

Discussion: Course of Action 1 provides the quickest possibility of achieving operational and strategic decision while focusing forces on clearing Channel Ports and Antwerp. It also optimizes use of ground, airfields, concentrated armored forces, and weather during critical

period of four-six weeks remaining for adequate flying/maneuver weather. It takes advantage of temporary enemy weakness. It directly threatens the missile threat to the U.K., and releases strategic and tactical air forces from CROSSBOW missions. Course of action 2 divides forces and places largest and hardest supported force on a secondary approach, which exits onto restricted maneuver ground farthest from the designated objective. It is hardest to support by local airfields or by air from U.K. and is generally out of range of U.K. based airborne forces. It is generally out of range for complementary operations to assist northern army group. Course of action 3 abandons all advantage of temporary superiority, air superiority, or logistical support and restricts use of DRAGOON force from developing its full operational potential.[535]

These factors should have been examined formally by the SHAEF staff and discussed with the Army Group Commanders, including Devers. More important, SHAEF's G-3 should have prepared a complete draft plan delineating clear boundaries based on force-space ratios, appropriate objectives, and the expected follow-on deployment for 12th Army Group through the Brittany ports. Also to be included would be the forces (and their sustenance and buildup) absorbed from the Mediterranean, following the attachment of the 6th Army Group from the Mediterranean forces to SHAEF. In preparing such a plan, the key operational and logistical factors would have been addressed and could have been studied by the Army Groups tasked to execute operations. The initiation of such planning was Eisenhower's responsibility as overall commander. Failing to back his own discussions with an in-depth analysis by his own staff, and armed with a shabbily done, out-of-date outline memorandum, Eisenhower was forced to decide the key operational plan of the post-OVERLORD campaign based upon the independent

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[535] Author's estimate.

briefings of two advocates, and the knowledge that he had been ordered by Marshall to assure that "the American contingent" was firmly under American command.

While the advocates often described the plans in terms of overall ground command, it must be stressed that when Montgomery proposed an operational design and control structure for the two Army Groups currently under his operational control. he did not specify a maneuver plan for 6th Army Group except in general terms, nor did he advocate assuming control of it. SCAEF would give direction both to the two Army Groups through Montgomery and to Devers, essentially permitting a weakened Broad Front. Devers' force would fix enemy attention to the Metz approach and perhaps the Belfort Gap, as well as provide for the defense of the southern front. More important, accepting Montgomery's operational design at no time precluded Eisenhower from assuming complete command and coordination of all ground forces while executing a concentrated thrust in the North. The true issue was strategy and its operational design, not command.

While the operational factors seemed clearcut, command—the great bugaboo of coalitions—emerged to dominate what should have been a clear decision.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Decision, Debate, Pursuit

Montgomery flew to see Bradley on the morning of 23 August, vainly hoping that he would support the concentrated thrust plan. Having already issued his plans and having in his mind successfully and geographically separated himself from the hated Britisher, Bradley announced his support for Eisenhower's idea of a Dual Thrust, or Broad Front.[536] (See figure 29.) Returning to his own tactical headquarters, Montgomery awaited the Supreme Commander, intent on pleading his case for a concentrated thrust under his command. Had he known the truth, he would have been more deflated than by Bradley's apparent turn-around.

The afternoon before, Eisenhower had signaled the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Alanbrooke's copy arrived in the evening. It elucidated several key points: that the "final system of command," made possible by communications for the accompanying air and naval sections, would permit a transfer of command to SHAEF of all forces by 1 September. (See figure 26.) While stating that the air situation would remain "coordinated" by SHAEF, the

> coordination between the 21st and Twelfth Army Groups, will terminate coincidentally with the establishment of SHAEF on the Continent.

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[536] *Patton Diary*, 23 August. Patton noted that Leigh Mallory had visited Bradley that day, supporting Monty's "four armies" turning north. Patton railed against sending tanks through Belgium, "where tanks are practically useless now, and will be wholly useless this winter." The opposite is true. Belgium is a superior avenue of approach aiming directly into the industrial heart of Germany, vice Lorraine, where Patton advocated going. Additionally, Patton notes: "I told Bradley that if he, Hodges and myself offered to resign unless we went east, Ike would have to yield but Bradley would not agree and said we owed it to the troops to hold on because if we left, the pickings [other generals as replacements] were poor."

Renaming the Army Groups by their geographic locations. Eisenhower assigned objectives for each. He directed that Montgomery's 21 Army Group. called the Army Group of the North by SCAEF, would

> operate to the Northeastward, securing successive bases along the coast with its final base possibly *ANTWERP*. Eventually it will be directed to advance Eastward generally North of the ARDENNES. The 21 Army Group will probably be reinforced by the entire Airborne Command and by such other units as are necessary to enable it to accomplish its first and immediately important missions [that Eisenhower defined as capturing the Pas de Calais].

The 12th Army Group, called the Army Group of the Center, he directed to

> advance under General BRADLEY [read not under Montgomery] to the East and Northeast of PARIS, from which area it can either strike Northeastward [to assist Montgomery] . . . and later advance through the Low Countries, or, if the enemy strength in that region is not greater than I now believe, it can alternatively strike Eastward, passing South of the ARDENNES. . . .
>
> The speed of Bradley's advance to the region East of PARIS will be governed by the speed at which the ports in BRITTANY can be cleaned up, and our supply situation improved.[537]

Eisenhower released the Strategic Air Forces "to resume maximum pressure against targets in GERMANY," but noted they would remain on call only when the ground battle's requirements so demanded. He noted that when the Army Group of the South was placed under SCAEF, it would

> continue to maneuver to support the advance of the Army Group of the Center.[538]

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[537] *Alanbrooke Papers* 6/2/30, SCAEF 67 222655B, AGWAR for the Combined Chiefs of Staff; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2087-2089. In later messages he refers to it as "the Northern Group of Armies."

[538] Ibid.

Thus, having committed himself both to a command structure and to what appeared to be a course of action placing both the "Center" and "South" Army Groups south of the Ardennes, any discussion between the generals would not be open to acceptance of a different course of action. Bradley obviously convinced Eisenhower to weight the southern approach. Directing 21 Army Group on its "final base" and only "eventually" moving east, Eisenhower appears to have been convinced by Bradley to accept the course of action not recommended by either the CIS or later, the JPS estimates. He appeared to be open to making the secondary avenue the main effort, without ever naming it so, thus avoiding controversy.[539]

Montgomery spoke with Eisenhower alone, asking Bedell Smith and Humphrey Gale to wait until the two commanders aired their views privately. Montgomery summarized the meeting in his M-108 to the CIGS. It said, in part:

> Ike came to see me today. After a long and weary discussion he agreed on our left flank we must clear the channel coast and establish a powerful air force in Belgium and invade the Ruhr. He also considers it necessary to invade Saar and would like to split the force. After further discussion he agreed that left flank movement must be strong enough to achieve quick success and it was then suggested there would not (repeat not) be enough left over for Saar operation at present. The problem of Command and control was then discussed. It seems public opinion in America demands Bradley shall hold his command directly under Ike and shall not be (repeat not be) subordinated to me. I said that left flank operations into Belgium and beyond would require careful co-ordination and control and that one commander must do this. This was finally agreed.

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[539] Bradley's NORMANDY TO THE RHINE Plan does not mention support from either the 21 or 6th Army Groups. Nor does it clarify how his two armies would be supplied up to and beyond the Rhine. Eisenhower's message is congruent with the principles advanced by Bradley's plan. The Joint Planners, as mentioned previously, recommended that "the axis of advance should not be directed exclusively on the METZ Gap." Should 21 Army Group be confined to seizing and establishing bases on the Channel up to Antwerp, the advance on the Ruhr becomes exactly this. Eisenhower consisently would claim after September that the "northern group" of armies was the "main effort," while ignoring all the ramifications of such a statement, claiming to give them actual priority as expected by Montgomery would be "exclusionary."

Noting he expected a draft directive before the final orders were published, he stated hopefully,

> I think discussion was valuable and cleared the air and there is a good hope that directive will be what is wanted.[540]

In his own log, he added several personal notes. He said that he offered to serve under Bradley, so important was it to have one commander coordinate the push. This Montgomery said, "horrified him." Encouraged by Eisenhower's willingness to let him

> co-ordinate the movement and fighting on the left flank as between 21 Army Group and 12 Army Group,

the strategy, not the command issue, was the problem Montgomery felt. He stated that Eisenhower,

> is terrified of public opinion in America and is trying to find a solution that will not put Bradley under me.[541]

More revealing, Monty recorded early in his description in his log that he prefaced his remarks to Eisenhower thusly:

> I made it quite clear to whatever he decided, that would be done-and loyally. But he must be in no doubt ever as to my views on the subject; if, after hearing my views, he decides to disregard them-that is his business and he has a perfect right to do so.[542]

Montgomery had no right to expect to be the ground commander in chief and had been told officially in June that the command would devolve to Eisenhower, that

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[540] *Alanbrooke Papers*, 6/2/30, M-108, 23 August 1944.

[541] *Montgomery Log*, 23 August 1944. It is clear that Montgomery believed the power to coordinate duplicated his role in Normandy, at least as far as the operations of the left flank of Hodges' forces were concerned. Bradley, as it will be seen, never accepted this.

[542] Ibid.

the Army Groups would thereafter be referred to geographically, that these Army Groups would organize into "two distinct zones of advance on the continent," and that 21 Army Group would be reinforced by either an American Army or at least a reinforced corps.[543]

American forces were in the ascendant numerically, and the preponderance of ground forces would, by the period of NEPTUNE's forecast end, be American. Having failed to provide an American combat general of sufficient seniority and combat experience to merit the "ground commander in chief" designation, the Americans had always considered overall ground command to be Eisenhower's job.[544] Lt. Gen. Nye, the Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff (VCIGS), had been present in Monty's tactical headquarters on the night of the 22 August and; after hearing of the results of the Eisenhower-De Guingand meeting, had cautioned Monty not to bring on an Allied command crisis, that the coalition and not command was the key consideration.[545]

While it was apparent that Montgomery believed that the required close control of a concentrated thrust could not be handled by the Supreme Commander and the SHAEF staff, he appeared far more concerned about executing what he believed to be the correct plan than about retaining ground command, though losing was no doubt

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[543] Ellis, *Victory in the West, I*, 83, citing SHAEF 17100/5/Ops, 1 June 1944. Eisenhower, on 19 August, drafted a letter to Monty stating he would assume command; the draft exists in the SHAEF OVERLORD 381 file as well as in the *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2077-2079. Its receipt is not acknowleged in the *Montgomery Log* or any messages to the CIGS. It is possible that this letter—and the directive noted "as attached"—was never sent to Monty, as these points were to be the subject of the 23 August meeting and no message to Montgomery seems to refer to this directive concerning command arrangements. The SHAEF 1 June message likewise appears missing from the SHAEF files.

[544] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 44; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 116, 105-118 passim.

[545] Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield*, 810.

a blow to his substantial ego. He therefore pressed Eisenhower for the 12 divisions of the First Army, a contingency permitted by Eisenhower's planning guidance of 1 June, but more importantly, a sizable force that, along with Dempsey's army, would permit a full-blooded thrust on the primary avenue of approach—a thrust that would be made by First US Army. This thrust would go into the Ruhr, not merely accompany Dempsey to Antwerp as flank protection.[546]

Eisenhower refused attachment or operational control of an American Army, stating that, politically, American opinion demanded a firm detachment of British and American forces, and that his orders, in this American election year, were to accomplish that separation. Montgomery believed that Eisenhower, however, had acceded to the key point desired, in Montgomery's words,

> that left flank operations into Belgium and beyond would require careful co-ordination and control and that one Commander must do this. This was finally agreed.[547]

From Montgomery's discussion, this clearly meant that the general coordination and operational direction of the northern thrust would be his. Moreover, he believed this would include First Army's direction of attack, the only logical fruit of having such responsibility.[548] Moreover, considering Eisenhower's immediate correspondence with Monty, it is clear that both men considered both the plan and the subject of command settled. On 24 August, Eisenhower wrote that he was issuing a

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[546] Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 241. He does not mention the 1 June document, but had obviously considered that it was more likely to achieve acceptance of "the plan" versus "the plan & command" option and had carefully considered what force would make his concept viable, as well as supportable logistically.

[547] *Alanbrooke Papers*, M-108, 23 August.

[548] Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 241-242.

confirmatory directive. He noted Monty's mission of clearing the coast, securing Antwerp as a base and eventually moving on to the Ruhr and, seeing the campaign as phased, stated:

> By the time Antwerp is reached the general strength and composition of the forces needed for the later task *[i.e., taking the Ruhr]* will have been determined.

Besides feeding Montgomery's expectation that the campaign was still considered flexible and situation dependent, Eisenhower "confirmed" Montgomery's ideas concerning control of the northern attacks but stopped short of authorizing a concerted push into the Ruhr. This letter also inserted both the seeds for misunderstanding and the direction of Montgomery's actions for the critical period of August and September, not simply in the location of Eisenhower's main effort, but in the commitment of the Airborne Army, SHAEF's only operational reserve. The key passages stated:

> Bradley's Army Group will be directed to thrust forward on its left, with its principal offensive mission, for the moment, to support the Army Group of the North in the attainment of the objectives noted above. He will likewise be directed to clean up the Brittany Peninsula as rapidly as possible, protect against any threat against our communications from the general area of Paris, and to begin building up, out of incoming forces, the necessary strength to advance eastward from Paris toward Metz.
>
> You, as Commanding General of the Army Group of the North, will be given the authority to effect the necessary operational coordination between your advancing forces and Bradley's left wing. Mechanical details for effecting this will be left to you and Bradley.

Proceeding further, Eisenhower stated:

> We must immediately prepare definite plans for the employment of the entire airborne force so as to speed up the accomplishment of the missions that you must attain rapidly in the Northeast. Unless we use

the Airborne Army, assuming it is practicable to do so, we will not be using all available assets and there would be no excuse for insisting upon the deployment of the major part of Bradley's strength on his extreme left.

Bradley is coming to see you this morning with instructions to bend every effort toward speeding up the deployment of his forces in that direction. The faster we do it the more certain will be our success and the earlier will come our opportunity to advance eastward from the Paris area.

In closing, Ike noted that speed was a necessity, and that SHAEF's logistics staff had assured him the plan was supportable.[549]

Montgomery's log records that he was certain that this "coordination" came with a limit. He noted,

> It is clear to me that when the northern tasks are completed, then the whole American effort will go off into the SAAR and central Germany.

Montgomery recorded that he and Bradley confirmed a boundary and that Hodges' First Army

> can produce up to nine divisions . . . and these will be directed to BRUSSELS-LIEGE area, on the right flank of 21 Army Group.[550]

Eisenhower reported his intentions to clear the northeastern sector and seize Antwerp to Marshall, but indicated that Bradley would clear Brittany,

> to provide for the necessary maintenance and the accelerated flow of divisions into this theater.

Eisenhower indicated Bradley would build up east of Paris before driving to Metz, but stated that the importance of the objectives to the northeast required him to

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[549] EL, Correspondence File, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 24 August 1944; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2090-2092.

[550] *Montgomery Log*, 24 August 1944.

concentrate there, and not to attempt a simultaneous move to the east. He noted that he was anxious to attack eastward to the French-German border,

> but there is no point in getting there until we are in a position to do something about it.[551]

While SHAEF seemed hesitant to publish a directive too far in advance of the 1 September takeover, the Army Group commanders issued orders based upon their discussions with SCAEF and each other. With troops already in Paris, Bradley issued "Letter of Instructions Number Six" on 25 August. Ordering his forces to resume their advance to the northeast, to cross the Seine and complete the encirclement of Paris, he directed that the "main effort initially on the left (west) flank prepare for further advance into Germany." Most important, he listed as Third Army's primary mission, after advancing to Reims, to

> [b]e prepared to continue the advance on Army Group order to seize the crossings of the RHINE River from MANNHEIM to KOBLENZ (both inclusive).

Patton's secondary mission was to use VIII Corps to complete Brittany's capture.[552] First Army's advance was carefully drawn to support the planned airborne operation LINNET, but Patton's indicated "directions of attack" clearly were planned to cross the Rhine south of the Ruhr, with eight infantry divisions and one armored. Two of Patton's armored divisions comprised the Brittany force.[553]

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[551] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2092-2094.

[552] *12th Army Group Report of Operations, V*, G-3, 85-87, plus accompanying map, Annex No. 1 Operation Map.

[553] Ibid., see para. 2 c. "Troops." A "direction of attack" is a restrictive measure specifying the exact route of attack to the objective. It is rare for an army group to specify exactly how an objective is to be approached. Bradley's instructions specified these for each of the First and Third Army's corps.

Montgomery's M.520 was issued the next day. (See figure 32.) Montgomery listed his Army Group's tasks as continuing to the northeast destroying the enemy, to secure the Pas de Calais, and then to secure Antwerp. He specified:

> Having completed these tasks, the eventual mission of the Army Group will be to advance eastwards on the RUHR.[554]

Montgomery followed Eisenhower's directions to the word; he was, in fact, rapidly organizing the campaign specified, but to maintain flexibility he directed Crerar's Army to keep its main weight to the right flank and to deal with enemy resistance by "right hooks." Speed, as he and Eisenhower agreed, was critical. Montgomery directed his main-effort army, Dempsey's Second:

> The Army will move with its armoured strength deployed well ahead; its passage northwards must be swift and relentless. By this means it will cut across the communications of the enemy forces in the coastal belt, and will thus facilitate the operations of the Canadian Army.

Monty specified how his armored "blitz" would be conducted:

> The proper tactics now are for strong armoured and mobile columns to by-pass enemy centres of resistance and to push boldly ahead, creating alarm and despondency in the enemy rear areas.
>
> Enemy centres of resistance thus by-passed should be dealt with by infantry columns coming on later.
>
> I rely on commanders of every rank and grade to "drive" ahead with the utmost energy; any tendency to be "sticky" or cautious must be stamped on ruthlessly.[555]

Montgomery had given 30 Corps the nod to spearhead the advance, hoping that Horrocks would lead the pack. O'Connor, whose desert laurels had not been burnished in EPSOM, GOODWOOD, or BLUECOAT, had been "grounded" in

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[554] M.520, 26-8-44.

[555] Ibid.

Normandy and his main transport assets taken to support Second Army's advance. Within a week, his armor had also been taken and placed in the van of attack. Second Army advanced with 30 Corps and 12 Corps after shaking out from their original one-corps frontage to the First US Army's left as it moved on to the Seine and began its assault at Vernon. Three other crossings were made north of Paris to give 12 Corps its own bridgehead and to provide crossing sites for Crerar's First Army to move on Le Havre and Dieppe.[556]

The pursuit for both Army Groups required a careful logistical regrouping, a reapportionment of transport, and carefully drawn boundaries to permit each force adequate road space and crossing sites. During this period Bradley and Dempsey clashed over use of roads, and Bradley, perhaps "getting even" for his Sicilian campaign experience, both provoked and ignored British concerns. The British press reported Dempsey's offhand comments on the affair, and this minor incident festered along with many rapidly growing feelings of hate within the American camp.[557]

These feelings, fed by Patton's histrionics and "off-the-record" comments to the American press, were encouraged at 12th Army Group by their SHAEF

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[556] *Second Army History*, 182-190; Baynes, *The Forgotten Victor*, 222-226, Chapter Seven, passim. O'Connor felt slighted by being left out, and his biographer implies that O'Connor, not Horrocks, would have done a better job both in the pursuit and during the GARDEN operation had 8 Corps been 2d Army's spearhead corps.

[557] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Pogue interview with Bradley, 6 November 1946; EL, Correspondence File, Eisenhower to Dempsey, 12 June 51, 2 June 51; Dempsey to Bradley, May 25th, 1951; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 383. Dempsey was reported in the press as noting that American traffic on his roads had slowed his advance to the Seine during the turn to the north. After the war Bradley described to the official historian that "Dempsey's charge was one of the greatest injustices ever done to the American Army." This incident never ended. Dempsey bristled over what he considered was a misstatement by the press and wrote Eisenhower in 1951 after Bradley revisited it in his memoirs. Bitter feelings had been fanned by the First Army Staff (formerly the II Corps Staff), who had also felt slighted in Sicily during the Patton-Monty affair; after COBRA, they felt that they, not the British, were the great contributors in NEPTUNE. The plain fact was that sufficient maneuver space and roads were needed and that parking the First Army in front of the Second Army when forces were being argued over for supporting a northern thrust was ignorant on Bradley's part.

counterparts, who saw the "coming of Eisenhower" as the end of their nemesis, Montgomery, who had berated their COSSAC plan.[558] Had Eisenhower stepped up to the land-command plate, this might have died. Eisenhower's conspicuous absence from the field, his tendency to permit the Army Groups to negotiate their own positions without firm guidance or support, his contradictory private statements and correspondence to Marshall, Bradley, and Montgomery, and his remarkable failure to issue a long-term "master plan" rather than short-term guidance messages gave all his competing command interests license to debate, argue, and in Bradley's case, sabotage coordinated plans for a cohesive campaign. Men would die, time would be lost, and the campaign would be skewed in September due to these practices. While the issue of strategy was a real one, the issue of command—not just who exercised it, but how—would be the determining factor in turning a favorable strategic situation into victory. This was SCAEF's responsibility.

As the American official history for the campaign noted, at this time Eisenhower's forces had a superiority of 20 to 1 in tanks, 2.5 to 1 in field guns, and total air supremacy over the battle areas. Yet this advantage would be fleeting. Intelligence had gilded their estimates with gold-laced prophesies of early collapse, and Eisenhower ignored the Maintenance of the Objective Principle for the old rubric of pursuit stated in American doctrine, "The pursuit is conducted on a broad front," and that during a pursuit, the commander "utilizes all means to maintain the continuity

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[558] Hamilton. *Master of the Battlefield*, 741-754. Montgomery's biographer tracks the discontent with Montgomery best. Unpublished comments to be found in the Eisenhower Library in the *Butcher Papers*. *Papers of Kay Summersby* (Diary), and at the Military History Institute in the *Bradley Commentaries*.

of the attack and to exert a relentless pressure on the defeated enemy."[559] The fact most unacceptable at SHAEF at this time was that the pursuit was rapidly coming to an end due to the broad-front pursuit's inability to be supported. Both Montgomery and Bradley had argued for a way to maintain an attack once the enemy recovered and supplies had to be rationed severely; Eisenhower's plans, however, made no such accomodations, yet.

On 29 August as virtually every Allied army was in hot pursuit on European soil of a retreating, battered Wehrmacht, Eisenhower published his first directive for SHAEF's campaign. (See figure 33.) Eisenhower announced,

> It is my intention to complete the destruction of the enemy forces in the West and then advance against the heart of the enemy homeland.

Repeating his original orders of 24 August concerning advance to Antwerp, he restated that the left wing of Bradley's advance would act in conjunction with the "Northern Group of Armies" with the

> principal offensive mission of assisting the Northern Group of Armies in the destruction of enemy forces west of the Oise and south of the Somme. It will then advance rapidly across the Somme, prepared to continue to the advance to the northeast. . . . The Commander-in-Chief Central Group of Armies will build up our incoming forces east of Paris, prepare to strike rapidly eastwards towards the Saar Valley to reinforce the Allied advance north and west of the Ardennes, and to assist the advance of the Seventh Army [still in Devers' DRAGOON Forces] beyond Dijon.[560]

Montgomery's 21 Army Group was given authority to draft, "in conjunction" with the First Allied Airborne Army, a plan

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[559] FM 100-5, 1944, 151, 153.

> for launching an airborne assault to insure the destruction of the retreating enemy forces. Planning and initial employment, in coordination with the Allied Naval and Air Commanders concerned, will be as directed by the Commander-in-Chief Northern Group of Armies.

Montgomery's own control of the northern advance was limited by his authorization to effect coordination with Bradley, but not to have operational control over any elements in Bradley's sector. As ground commander, Eisenhower should have coordinated operations, not Montgomery, who was forced to deal without authority with Bradley, whose actions demonstrated that he never intended to offer anything but the appearance of cooperation, not act in harness on a single plan.

Nor was the First Allied Airborne attached to 21 Army Group, whose authority extended to planning until forces actually landed on the ground. Brereton's command umbilical cord to SHAEF and his invisible authority lines to Spaatz and Arnold were likewise neither cut nor curtailed. In every case with Bradley, Hodges, or Brereton, Montgomery had to rely on agreement to gain compliance with any plan or order.[561]

Montgomery decided to use the airborne army at Tournai (OP LINNET) on 29 August and, while waiting for the weather to clear, briefed Alanbrooke on the current situation. Montgomery noted that despite Bradley's agreement to move nine divisions toward Belgium, with the lack of a "ground C-in-C, and no air C-in-C," problems may arise because

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[560] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2100-2102; NARA, RG 331, Overlord 381, Msg FX-86983, and SCAF 256/24. August 24, 1944. On the 24th, Field Marshal Wilson and Eisenhower began coordinating the change of command status for the southern forces.

[561] Ibid.; *Montgomery Log*, 29 August 1944, notes that he had failed to be given powers of operational direction. He recorded his disagreement with the coordination of the left wing, and that he would discuss this again with Eisenhower.

> Eisenhower's ideas for the future were that 12 Army Group should head off eastwards [to the] to the SAAR; Third Army (Patton) was already heading for FRANKFURT alone, and may well get into difficulties.[562]

On 1 September, as Eisenhower "took command directly" of both the 21 and 12th Army Groups, Montgomery was promoted to Field Marshal, an event met with derision in the American camp and at SHAEF.[563] The day, however, beckoned future command issues, not affected by promotions in status or rank. The operational situation swung further toward a decision on advancing not merely "on" but "into" Germany, a decision put off by Eisenhower on the 23d, his letter on the 24th, and his directive on the 29th.

On 2 September, Eisenhower traveled to 12th Army Group's Headquarters and met with Bradley, Vandenberg, Hodges, and Patton. Eisenhower's commanders stressed that continuing the American movement east would obviate the "future great battle of Germany," as Patton recorded in his diary, but Patton also noted that "waiting would cause a battle for Germany." Despite his messages to Montgomery and his later explanations, Eisenhower chaired a meeting that essentially pulled the American effort southward away from the direct approach into the Ruhr. In addition to assigning objectives for each army, decisions were made to reattach the 79th Division to Patton after the clearance of the "Pas de Calais-Le Havre"; that the 6th Armored would be reassigned from Brittany; and that priorities for supplies would be to V Corps of First

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[562] *Montgomery Log*, 29 August 1944; Danchev and Todman, *Alanbrooke War Diaries*, 586. Alanbrooke was not so pessimistic, but stated, "[I[t remains to be seen what political pressure is put on Eisenhower to move Americans on a separate axis from the British."

[563] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2110; *Patton Diary*, September 1, 1944. Eisenhower wrote a fulsome congratulatory note. Bradley, apparently, did not. Patton recorded cynically Eisenhower's public praise for Montgomery at a press conference held to underscore Ike's total control of ground operations.

Army and to Third Army. Several days earlier, Patton had met with Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson, whose Ninth Army Headquarters would begin assuming command of units in Brittany.[564]

Bradley and his generals were convinced that victory was in their grasp and that only Montgomery and the air force's plans to drop airborne troops, thus cutting off their air transport of supplies, could slow their victory. Hansen records Bradley as saying,

> Give me 8,000 tons [of supplies] east of Paris and we'll get going. I'll stop effort over on the east flank almost altogether and turn everything toward Germany. We can start nine divisions almost immediately. Six should certainly get to the Rhine very quickly.

Hansen's own record expands on this view:

> General expects to be on the Rhine a week from Sunday [10 September] if Ike will give him the go ahead sign on the movement he wants to make. Had we been able to go, perhaps we should have been there today.[565]

Eisenhower's stated operational vision remained one of several punches—one toward the Pas de Calais area, one to the area toward Brussels, and one east of Paris. Montgomery still viewed the possibility of a single, seamless offensive along the Channel Coast, with the inside force wheeling due east through Liege-Aachen-Ruhr.

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[564] *Patton Diary*, August 31, 1944; September 2, 1944; *Third Army COS Diary*, 1 September 44; *Eisenhower Papers, V*, appointment diary. The Chief of Staff diary, Third Army notes that Third Army was stopped that day for lack of fuel and records the meeting. The *Eisenhower Diary* and *Patton Diary* state this meeting was held on 2 September. The *Patton Diary*, 2 September 1944, also comments, "Ike is all for caution, since he has never been at the front and has no feel of actual fighting." Patton damns the Services of Supply Chief, J.C.H. Lee, decrying Eisenhower's comment that the Communications Zone had done a miraculous job, "whereas we consider that they have failed utterly and probably lost us a victory before winter, through their inability to keep us supplied with gasoline." No comment was made regarding Patton's failure to capture the American-required ports.

[565] *Hansen Diary*, 1 September. Eisenhower failed to give Bradley permission to move 12th Army Group due east on the 2d. The 10th of September would have great significance for the campaign. On that day, Eisenhower would give Montgomery permission to seize a Rhine crossing.

As his orders and reorganization of both Crerar's and Dempsey's forces indicated, he intended both to concentrate and lead with armored forces and airborne landings.[566]

Eisenhower's vision modified Montgomery's concept of sequential punches on opposite flanks as used in Normandy, a frontage only one-eighth the length that a move to the German border entailed. Heavily influenced by the "victory disease" spread by his intelligence section, Eisenhower saw these not as coordinated or timed punches or attacks but rather extensions of an all-out pursuit on all fronts. Intelligence clearly pointed out the weakness of the enemy, but a careful study of the remaining order of battle indicated that the Germans were in a good position to contest the clearing of the north coast and could move forces to block penetrations on key avenues. Montgomery wanted all available forces to steamroller the remaining enemy divisions as well as to concentrate astride the northern two avenues in a sector more than 100 miles wide. Eisenhower's idea that the enemy would be "stretched"—and thereby unable to resist—addressed neither force-to-space ratios nor the rapidly diminishing returns of the dispersion of logistical resources.[567]

Within several days of issuing his directive, the operational picture changed significantly, requiring Eisenhower to promulgate a concept for his campaign. SHAEF's G-2 trumpeted the good news:

> The German Army in the WEST is no longer a cohesive force but a number of fugitive battle groups, disorganized and even demoralized, short of equipment and arms . . . The enemy, in fact, has been out-generalled and out-fought and is no longer in a position to offer serious resistance on any line short of the WEST wall . . . And so, GERMANY

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[566] *Montgomery Log*, 31 August 1944.

[567] By stretching his own forces, he assured that they would not be strong enough to break through resistance when it formed, or have the logistical wherewithal to shift forces to concentrate.

> is inevitably faced with continued withdrawal in the WEST and on all her fronts for she does not now dispose sufficient forces, particularly armour, to compete with the Allied armies.[568]

SHAEF had unsophisticated means to assess enemy troop strength or capability but assessed the enemy's 50 nominal divisions as equating to 27 with a rough strength of two panzer and 10 infantry divisions north of the Ardennes, two panzer/panzer grenadier divisions and four infantry divisions south of the Ardennes, one division in Southwest France, and one panzer and two infantry divisions escaping from the Rhone Valley. Five divisions were penned in the ports designated by Hitler as "fortresses."[569]

The operational picture begged the question of the soundness of Eisenhower's decision to advance on all fronts. The remaining strength of the German Army remained not only in the north on the route to the Ruhr, but in the key port "fortresses" that SHAEF needed captured to fully develop the theater's administrative base. With Allied armor temporarily rampaging with impunity, any major changes in deployment had to be made immediately, before dispersion and logistics forced the advancing troops to remain on their current axes of advance.

At the time of the Eisenhower-Montgomery meeting in August, Patton's Third Army had pushed almost to the Seine south of Paris, its spearheads reaching Fontainbleau. By the time Bradley's commanders met with Eisenhower ten days later, Third Army had reached the Meuse at Verdun-Commercy. Its cavalry elements

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[568] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 24, 2 September 1944, 4.

[569] Ibid., 2. SHAEF never conducted "force ratio" or equivalent combat power correlations per front for its army groups, armies, or forces in general, nor did they focus on combat power analysis on individual avenues of approach except in very general terms. This was much of the problem in the Normandy beachhead, and it persisted throughout the campaign.

patrolled the Moselle between Pont-a-Mouson and Nancy. Both Patton's XII and XX Corps reported "no established [enemy] front line." [570] Hodges' First Army had extended its XIX Corps across the Belgian border south of Tournai, its V Corps on the line Cambrai-Le Cateau, and its VII Corps to Mons to the south of Charleroi, bagging an additional 25,000 prisoners in the process.[571]

21 Army Group, however, was not outdone. Dempsey's Second Army had crossed the Seine and the Somme, and was disposed with the Guards Armoured, 11th Armoured, and 7th Armoured Divisions from Douai to Bethune to Lille on 2 September. Dempsey's intentions were to move on Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent without stopping to consolidate or resupply.[572] (See figure 34.) Crerar's two corps had advanced with the II Canadian Corps on the right and forward and the British I Corps on the coast. The First Army's mission had been to complete the destruction of the German army northwest of the Seine and to capture the ports of Dieppe and Le Havre. By the end of August, three division-sized bridgeheads had been established on the Seine and, while infantry proceeded towards the ports, Crerar passed the 4th Canadian Armoured and the Polish Armoured Divisions forward in column on his right flank. Dieppe fell on 1 September while armored division spearheads reached the area north of Abbeville.[573] (See figure 35.)

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[570] *Third Army After Action Report, I*, 61-63; Operations maps, 21 August, 31 August, 15 September 1944; II. Staff Reports, G-2, 2 September, LXI-LXII.

[571] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, I, 30-37; Situation Map No. 4 (AMIENS-LILLE-CHARLEROI). Most of these prisoners had escaped the "Falaise Gap."

[572] *Second Army History*, 193. Map "Dispositions and Intentions of Second Army on 2 Sep 44. (Reproduced as figure 35.)

[573] NAC, RG 24, Volume 10636, Report by GEN. H.D.G. Crerar, CB, DSO, covering Operations of the First Canadian Army from 24 AUG-1st SEPT 1944; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10542, File 215A21.016(9). Montgomery sent a message to Crerar as his armor coiled for maintenance, saying, "IT IS VERY

21 Army Group's spearheads had moved 150 miles from 28 August to 2 September and, with the enemy forming no coherent front, Dempsey's forces struck out toward its key objectives of Antwerp and Brussels. With bad weather delaying the air drop at Tournai, LINNET was cancelled when the US First Army continued its advance, overrunning the intended target area. Montgomery had wanted the 1 Airborne Corps to move toward Ghent, thus anchoring his flank while Second Army continued its advance, but discussions with Bradley on 3 September produced a new agreement. Army Group boundaries pointing east defined the axes of advance of both Montgomery's and Bradley's Army Groups. From the point of view of operations, this was a far-reaching decision affecting the rest of the campaign in Europe. SHAEF was not present at the conference deciding upon these boundaries, nor was there any apparent discussion from the SHAEF G-3.[574]

The new boundary gave Bradley operational responsibility for the area south of the line Tournai-Wavre-Hasselt-Sittard-Garzweiler. Dempsey described the inter-army boundary in more dramatic terms:

> It will run just SOUTH of a line BRUSSELS-DUSSELDORF, which gives the whole of the RUHR to me. We will, if possible, by-pass the RUHR to the NORTH and come in behind it near HAMM.[575]

Montgomery, as he frequently did, followed up the conference with a general "M" directive to confirm the details of what had been discussed. He announced as his intention in M.523:

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necessary that your two Armd Divs should push forward with all speed towards ST OMER and beyond. NOT rpt NOT consider this time for any div to halt for maintenance. Push on quickly."

[574] *Montgomery Log*, 2-3 September 1944.

(a) To advance eastwards and destroy all enemy forces encountered.

(b) To occupy the RUHR, and get astride the communications leading from it into Germany and to the sea ports.[576]

His general concept was to have Second Army complete the capture of Brussels-Ghent-Antwerp, with 12 Corps echeloned back to await Crerar's clearance of the Bruges area. Crerar's own advance was to halt in this area "until the maintenance situation allows its employment further forward." His exact plan for the Second Army and his understanding of what Bradley had "agreed to" laid the groundwork for his later decisions (see figures 36 and 37):

Second Army

6. On 6 September, the Army will advance eastwards with its main bodies from the general line BRUSSELS-ANTWERP. Before that date light forces may operate far afield, as desired.
7. The western face of the RUHR between DUSSELDORF and DUISBERG will be threatened frontally.
8. The main weight of the Army will be directed on the RHINE between WESEL and ARNHEM.
9. One division, or if necessary a Corps, will be turned northward towards ROTTERDAM and AMSTERDAM.
10. Having crossed the RHINE, the Army will deal with the RUHR and will be directed on the general area OSNABRUCK-HAMM-MUNSTER-RHEINE.

Operations of 12 Army Group

11. First US Army is being directed to move its left forward in conjunction with the advance of 21 Army Group.
12. First US Army is directing its left two Corps (7 and 19) on:

MAASTRICHT-LIEGE

SITTARD-AACHEN

COLOGNE-BONN

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[575] *Dempsey Diary*, 3 September 1944. Brussels had been given to Second Army in 21 Army Group Amendment No. 1 to M 520, 29-8-44.

[576] M.523, 3-9-44.

13. First US Army will assist in cutting off the RUHR by operations against its south-eastern face, if such action is desired by Second Army.[577]

Eisenhower had met with his American commanders on 2 September, but had not seen Montgomery for any length of time since 23 August. In the meantime, he remained at SHAEF's "forward" headquarters, at Granville, France, some 400 miles from the front. He announced his "campaign plan" on 4 September by message. This message stated in part:

> Enemy resistance on the entire front shows signs of collapse.

After reviewing the enemy situation, he estimated that the only course of action open to the Germans for preventing collapse was to reinforce their retreating forces with divisions from within Germany or other fronts to block the key entries to the Ruhr and the Saar, this contingency Eisenhower noted as being doubtful, as the enemy would place a priority on defending the Ruhr approach. He stated definitively:

> Our best opportunity of defeating the enemy in the West lies in striking at the RUHR and at the SAAR, confident that he will concentrate the remainder of his available forces in the defense of these essential areas.

Having announced his chosen course of action, he stated:

> My intention continues to be the destruction of the enemy forces and this will be the primary task of all elements of the Allied Expeditionary Force.

His concept of operations by groups of armies was stated as:

> The mission of Northern Group of Armies and of that part of Central Group of Armies operating north-west of the ARDENNES is to secure

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[577] Ibid.

> ANTWERP, breach the sector of the Siegfried Line covering the RUHR and then seize the RUHR.[578]

Given the importance of the Ruhr in the Allies' estimates, it was clear to Montgomery that Eisenhower not only had targeted his forces for the main objective, but also had confirmed that Bradley would closely cooperate and that this directive thoroughly supported his M.523, issued the day before.

Assuming that the message followed the standard missions in priority, Bradley's missions south of the Ardennes were clear:

> The missions of the Central Group of Armies, exclusive of that portion operating north-west of the ARDENNES, are:
>
> A. To capture Brest
>
> B. To protect the southern flank of Allied Expeditionary Force
>
> C. To occupy the sector of the Siegfried Line covering the SAAR and then to seize FRANKFURT. It is important that this operation should start as soon as possible, in order to forestall the enemy in this sector, but troops of Central Group of Armies operating against the RUHR north-west of the ARDENNES must first be adequately supported.
>
> D. To take any opportunity of destroying enemy forces withdrawing from south-west and southern FRANCE.

The final paragraph continued the ill-defined command authority of 21 Army Group over First Allied Airborne Army:

> The First Allied Airborne Army will operate in support of Northern Group of Armies up to and including the crossing of the RHINE and then be prepared to operate in large scale operations in the advance into GERMANY.[579]

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[578] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2115-2118 ; NARA RG 331, Overlord 381, msg. 13765, 4 Sept 1944. This message was drafted by the G-3, Maj.-Gen. Bull, on 3 September and was reviewed in conference with Spaatz and two of his air commanders, and with Bull. Eisenhower strengthened the words concerning FAAA from the draft, "will operate in accordance with existing instructions."

[579] Ibid.

Eisenhower's directive was not meant to bow to Montgomery's plan nor even to grant priority for it. More important was the accompanying staff paper that went to Eisenhower unseen by the Commander of 21 Army Group, though its contents were obviously inspired by the 2 September Americans-only command meeting chaired by Eisenhower. The accompanying paper, called [the] "Advance to Breach the Seigfried [sic] Line Appreciation," revisited the issue of forces to favor an advance by Third Army. The tactical situation, it stated, posed

> an opportunity to breach the Seigfried [sic] Line by rapid aggressive movement by the Third Army on the SAAR and thence on FRANKFURT. Estimates indicate that the minimum forces for this operation should be about seven divisions. From the logistical point of view, however, Central Group of Armies only can say whether this would be possible without prejudicing operations north of the ARDENNES. As US ground forces are now distributed, the operation appears practicable only if a corps of three divisions is withdrawn from the First Army effort and made available to the Third Army, thus leaving First Army with two corps of three divisions each.[580]

The 14th, 15th, and 16th paragraphs of the memo contradicted the logic of the SHAEF's G-2 Enemy Order of Battle Map, published on 2 September, that showed unengaged enemy divisions holding the Channel Coast as far as the hook of Holland. These paragraphs stated:

> In view of the relative weakness of the enemy northwest of the ARDENNES, it is considered practicable to reduce the strength of the Allied forces making the main effort without prejudicing its success. In fact, it is considered desirable to do so to maintain the speed of advance. If one US corps is withdrawn from these forces, the Northern Group of Armies will have its own fourteen divisions plus the support of the First Army (UNITED STATES) with six divisions. The First

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[580] NARA, RG 331, Overlord 381, SHAEF/17100/18/Ops(A), "Advance to Breach the SEIGFRIED [sic] LINE Appreciation, 1; SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 24; *Patton Diary*, 30 August 1944; Patton, *War As I Knew It*, 120. Patton states that he had made this argument to Bradley and Bull on this day, but that SHAEF did not concur with it. He referred to this as "the most momentous error of the war." Four days later, it appears that Bull is making Patton's case for him to Eisenhower.

Allied Airborne Army of approximately four divisions will also support the Northern Group of Armies. There will therefore be twenty-four divisions for the accomplishment of the main object.

This reduction in strength of the First Army would release a Corps of three divisions for operations elsewhere on the front of Central Group of Armies. Whether this extra Corps could be used in an offensive role depends upon the logistic situation which is a matter for Central Group of Armies. It is not considered that operations should be conducted towards the SAAR at the expense, logistically, of the main operations.

> Should it prove possible to operate against the SAAR without prejudices to the main operations against the RUHR there are many advantages to be gained by anticipating the enemy in the occupation of the SAAR sector of the SEIGFRIED [sic] LINE and striking at FRANKFORT [sic] without further delay.

The staff's recommendation was precisely what Eisenhower wanted to hear, and to believe:

> General Bradley has full authority to transfer units from First to Third Armies. Therefore, no instruction to him in this respect is necessary. Should, however, the Supreme Commander be called upon to make a decision on this question, it is recommended that:
>
> a. First Army be reduced to two Corps and given first call on US logistical resources;
>
> b. Third Army, reinforced as required, be permitted to advance on the SAAR as soon as this can be undertaken without prejudice to operations northwest of the ARDENNES;
>
> c. A Corps be held in Army Group reserve in the PARIS-TROYES-[area] for use as necessary.[581]

Thus, Eisenhower was given his "staff's recommendation," which was in fact, based on personal friendships and politics rather than on military considerations. Having already decided that the Saar would have equal verbal weight in all discussions of objectives with the Ruhr, despite the obvious falsehood of the matter as identified by the JIS appreciation, Bull's appreciation of the forces available, their

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[581] SEIGFRIED [sic] LINE Appreciation, 2.

capabilities, and the stated ability not "to prejudice operations north of the ARDENNES" by stripping away forces was sophistry, not a careful appreciation. The false positive enemy picture implied was in contradiction to Eisenhower's own G-2's estimate. Bull's paper was in fact, low-grade staff work. Bull had "situated the appreciation."

At the heart of the problem was SHAEF's own "appreciation." Using statements such as, "The enemy has no prospect of a rectification of this dismal state of affairs," while dramatic, was incredibly wrong.[582] The much vaunted ULTRA failed to identify German moves within Germany not only to strengthen the West Wall, but to create panzer brigades from burnt-out Eastern Front divisions or to rapidly reequip and reorganize divisions from the streams of stragglers unstoppable by the "air supremacy" that had meant so much. Moreover, SHAEF seemed ignorant of the tactical problems at hand.

The ports all had to be reduced by force, requiring thousands of tons of bombs and artillery as well as troops. Once captured, each would require up to two months to be cleared of mines, debris and sunken ships, and engineers had to rebuild facilities as well as rail and road links from each port to the outside. Never was the victory disease more prevalent than among Eisenhower, the SHAEF staff, and America's self-proclaimed thruster, Patton. Patton's fantasy of going to Frankfurt with seven divisions was a recipe for nondecision at the operational level, even if it could be accomplished. Moreover, it ignored every factor of terrain, enemy strength, logistics, and weather, besides hamstringing airpower. Besides failing to guarantee any

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[582] SHAEF Weekly Summary No. 24, 4.

operational decision, SHAEF's planners had failed to consult their own logisticians, who contributed nothing to the directive. Once the directive was sent, the logisticians convened finally to assess what could be done. The 4 September directive rivaled Eisenhower's TORCH plan for failing to concentrate on getting to the primary objective.[583]

Also of import as the days of fall turned to rain, was the great weight given to First Allied Airborne Army. It was not, in fact, the same as adding four divisions to 21 Army Group. As July and August had already shown, it was difficult to bring an airborne operation to fruition. Nor were the airmen and airborne commanders intent on letting their forces be used for campaigning once dropped. Seize, hold, and leave quickly were their watchwords. Intent on a safe drop and a rapid link, Brereton and the Americans intended to keep US divisions out of 21 Army Group's order of battle for any but a very short time. Melding this mindset to an operationally significant objective was a challenge not yet accomplished.

Most ludicrous was the implication that the forces available north of the Ardennes were a coordinated force heading for the Ruhr. They were not under one commander following one plan. First Army's left neither supported nor acted in concert with Dempsey and Brereton's divisions were not under Montgomery's command until dropped, and then for a limited period. Nor were the "14" divisions of 21 Army Group available to press to the Ruhr. In Crerar's Army, I Corps was spread from Le Havre to Abbeville and Crerar was debating with Montgomery the problem

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[583] Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 258, 259. The Chief of Staff of IX Engineer Command, which built airfields for 9th Air Force, estimated that support possibilities for Patton's divisions would be heavily restricted, and estimated that perhaps no more than three divisions could be supplied.

of laying siege to Boulougne, Calais, Dunkirk, and Ostende, besides reaching to the Scheldt, an air-line distance of 90 miles. Dempsey had yet to recover his 8 Corps from Normandy, and his remaining corps driving toward Breda and Eindhoven were halted at the Dutch frontier awaiting airborne support. In reality, only five divisions and two armored brigades were available for a drive either eastward or northward once Antwerp was cleared. Any force driving eastward would have to rely heavily on First Army to carry the Liege-Aachen-Cologne corridor, the true highway to the Reich. And Bradley refused to synchronize his left with these efforts. From this "attack," Bull thought removing divisions would speed the process of penetrating the Siegfried Line? How?

Eisenhower's directive was transmitted at 1755, no doubt crossing Montgomery's M-160, which was transmitted at 2055. Given the state of SHAEF's communications and its isolation, Eisenhower should have understood that Monty would have communicated something after the 2 September meeting, but probably not so soon. Montgomery's Liaison Officer at 12th Army Group informed him that Bradley would split his supplies evenly between Hodges and Patton. This bode poorly for a concerted thrust on the Ruhr by Dempsey and Hodges, as Montgomery recorded in his log:

> First Army, on my right, is being scaled down in consequence; and its right hand Corps is being directed round to the south of the Ardennes; only two corps 7 and 19, are coming on with me on my right. . . .
>
> I feel very strongly that a big decision is required.[584]

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[584] *Montgomery Log*, 4 September 1944. The day before, he noted his belief in a strong thrust "somewhere." Appreciating the terrain, he stated, "The country leading into Germany via METZ and FRANKFURT is very hilly and wooded, and is good for defence. It is easy 'going' round north of the RUHR."

M-160 was a devastating appreciation that contradicted the yet-to-be-seen Eisenhower directive. In nine short paragraphs, Montgomery critiqued the situation as he saw it, stressing the logistical problems that would only increase and revisiting the objective and the object of the OVERLORD campaign:

1. I consider we have now reached a stage where one really powerful and full-blooded thrust toward Berlin is likely to get there and thus end the German war.
2. We have <u>not</u> enough maintenance resources for two full-blooded thrusts.
3. The selected thrust must have all the maintenance resources it needs without any qualification and any other operations must do the best it can with what is left over.
4. There are only two possible thrusts, one via the Ruhr and the other via Metz and the Saar.
5. In my opinion the thrust likely to give the best and quickest results is the northern one via the Ruhr.
6. Time is vital and the decision regarding the selected thrust must be made at once and Paragraph 3 above will then apply.
7. If we attempt a compromise solution and split our maintenance resources so that neither thrust is full-blooded we will prolong the war.
8. I consider the problem viewed above as very simple and clear-cut.
9. The matter is of such vital importance that I feel sure you will agree that a decision on the above lines is required at once. If you are coming this way perhaps you would look in and discuss it. If so, delighted to see you [for] lunch tomorrow. Do *not* feel I can leave this battle just at present.[585]

No meeting of the minds was possible, for both commanders viewed the situation from prejudiced vistas. 12th Army Group's battle had encouraged Eisenhower to start the Double Thrust theorized by the Broad Front concept. Patton's

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[585] EL. Correspondence File, M 160, 4 September 1944. Monty also hand-wrote a letter to Eisenhower on the same date thanking him for his congratulations on promotion to Field Marshal. Judging from the tone of his message, letter, and log entries, he considered that there was no chasm in their relationship

Third Army had been halted on 30 August due to lack of fuel. Bradley restored Third Army's equal issue of fuel with First Army on 5 September, and Patton decided, if necessary, he would continue his attack by pretending to reconnoiter and then reinforcing his advance as an attack. Patton moved out toward the Moselle, the Siegfried Line, and in his mind, "the Rhine." The same day, Bradley transferred the 79th Division from the XIX Corps near Mons to Patton's XV Corps on his right flank, a move that Eisenhower had approved on 2 September.[586]

Fuel, however, remained the main issue. Bradley's equalization of supply for both First and Third Army belied any claim by Eisenhower that the northern thrust had "priority."[587] While Monty counted on a full-blown attack by First Army toward Aachen, Bradley disregarded this concern for attacking directly into the industrial heart of Germany in order to reestablish his heartfelt plan, the five-corps assault south of the Ardennes that he had proposed in the NORMANDY TO THE RHINE plan. Patton's forces moved forward as his supplies increased, and he ordered his two advancing corps, the XII and XX, to seize Nancy and Metz, respectively. Patton added

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and that he was expressing his professional opinion, not challenging Eisenhower's right to command. Montgomery had seen Ike for "10 minutes" on the 26th; their last substantial discussion was on the 23d.

[586] *Patton Diary*, September 3-5, 1944; MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Bradley interview with Pogue. Bradley states he permitted Patton to stop when he felt it was necessary.

[587] CMH. Royce L. Thompson. Historical Division, Services of Supply. MS, "ETO Field Commands Gasoline Status August-September 1944," Study No. 21, 1948, 16, 36. Patton's Third Army on 1 September "required" 450,000 gallons of gasoline, 10,000 gallons of diesel, plus lubricants; 110,600 gallons were delivered. Packaged gasoline (in cans) was computed at a rate of 276 gallons per long ton. Bulk gasoline was computed at 368 gallons per ton. As a very rough estimate, an American field army in September 1944 required about 1,100 tons of fuel daily. Patton's Army, temporarily under a 2,000-ton-per-day supply limit (2 September), requested 1,500 tons daily in fuel, 500 in rations/supplies. See *COS Third Army Diary*, 28 August-2 September 1944.

a flourish to his plan; he ordered XII Corps to be prepared to rush forward to seize Mannheim and establish a bridgehead on the east bank of the Rhine.[588]

Hodges' First Army was the key to any American participation in a concentrated northern offensive or any direct attack on the Ruhr. It had begun its swing north on Dempsey's flank with nine divisions, three of them armored. Bradley in his 2 September conference had made clear that the right (southernmost) corps, the Vth, was to have priority of supply. Fronted between Soissons and Compiegne, V Corps wheeled due eastward with two infantry and one armored division with its new boundaries stretching from the Grand Dutchy of Luxembourg to the southern Belgian border. On 4 September it pushed toward the Meuse and beyond.[589] By 6 September, V Corps had captured Sedan and, as gasoline shortages halted its armor, enemy resistance stiffened about 8 September. By 10 September, the corps had entered Luxembourg City and prepared to cross the Sauer River and then move on to Coblenz.[590]

Hodges had told his corps commanders, "It is my desire that the advance of First Army shall not be stopped for lack of supplies." Supply economies, however, had fallen short of this goal, though the Army was arrayed from right to left almost on the German border. Hodges' G-2 reported four infantry and seven panzer divisions to the Army's front, in a strength approximating two infantry and two panzer divisions. Liege, directly on the gateway to Germany, had fallen on the 8th, and by 11 September

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[588] *Third Army After Action Report, I*, September 4 (D+90); ibid., Annex 2, Operational Directive, 5 Sep 44, XI.

[589] *V Corps History*, 228-234, contains operations maps, orders, and overlays as well as a narrative for the advance.

[590] Ibid., 235-242.

divisional patrols had entered Germany in the V and VII Corps sectors. Bradley's reduction of the 5:2 tonnage allocations between First and Third Armies to a 1:1 ratio had been hardest felt in XIX Corps, which had barely reached the Dutch border near Maastricht when the Army halted on 12 September.[591]

The result of Hodges' priorities was a refused left flank leaving a gap between 21 Army Group and First Army. On Bradley's bidding, Hodges had pushed toward his right, ostensibly to gain crossings on the Meuse, but leaving the XIX Corps' troops in the more open sector into Germany grounded for lack of fuel. While First Army's other corps were at the Siegfried Line, XIX Corps was leapfrogging its units and was still 20 miles from the border. More important, with the Siegfried Line at its weakest and the enemy retreating in disarray, Bradley had withdrawn the 79th Division from the extreme left flank of his army group to be moved to Patton's right-hand flank several hundred miles away. Perhaps more critically, at the same time he had moved the 5th Armored Division from its assembly area near the 79th, to accompany V Corps on its advance towards the hills and woods of the Eifel.[592]

From the point of view of sitting on the best terrain corridor into Germany and beyond, and 12th Army Group's assigned mission of supporting the 21 Army Group, XIX Corps should have been First Army's main effort and an obvious candidate for

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[591] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, 38-46; Situation Map No. 5, LIEGE-AACHEN-DUREN.

[592] CMH Files. 8-3.1 AW, MS, Historical Division, European Theater of Operations, *Breaching the Siegfried Line*, I, Chapters, I, III, VII, VIII, XII. (This is the theater "first draft" of the official history. It is not to be confused with XIX Corps pamphlet of same name listed in bibliography.) Bradley's action is in concert with the "infantry view" that every corps needed an armored division. Bradley makes no mention of this in his memoirs, and his own operations files are strangely empty concerning this period: the intelligence files for this period are missing. The official historian sheds little light on the decision, though the theater historian's preliminary history has excellent material and maps concerning XIX Corps problems. Additional material is found in the Combat Interviews Section of the Theater Historian's Files, RG 407.

the addition of another armored division. Instead, XIX Corps was grounded and stripped of a division which, at the height of the "fuel crisis," was transported laterally across the length of the Army Group's own lines of communication to be committed in a secondary operation. A four-division thrust by XIX Corps, then, was ruled out, Corlett being denied the ability to make a key thrust conceptually similar to that of another XIX Corps Commander in another army, Heinz Guderian, had made in 1940. From the point of view of ground alone, Corlett was the key to the Schlieffen-in-reverse plan that drove Montgomery's intentions. Bradley hobbled him at the time the Germans were weakest.

Bradley, as a self-professed master student of terrain, must have known this.[593] The joint decision of Montgomery and Bradley to extend the Army Group boundary beyond Brussels and into Germany had given Bradley the best terrain approach. From a geographical perspective, the two avenues identified for SHAEF's Broad Front or double thrust were within the confines of 12th Army Group's boundaries. The northern terrain approach begged a heavy concentration of armor which, in the hands of a "German" or like-thinking general (or following Montgomery's operational policy set forth in M.520), would have rushed the enemy's defenses as they were still unmanned and perhaps linked with airborne forces to cross the waterways. This had happened in reverse in 1940 in the same sector during the seizure of Eben Emael.[594] In 1944, with the Rhine and the Ruhr ahead on an eastward axis, its logic was undeniable.

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[593] The author willingly attests to Bradley's ability to read a tactical map. During several on-the-ground studies of the Tunisian battles of Bradley's corps outside of Bizerte, especially the four-division assault from Choigui Pass northward, the author was impressed with the precision and care of Bradley's terrain estimate and attack plan. Bradley, like Montgomery, was a master of the set-piece attack at corps level.

Moreover, such an advance would have been an American operation, with Second Army relegated to protecting its north flank and operational coordination logically being performed by a strong "ground forces commander," Eisenhower. This would have been the obvious result had LINNET II been agreed upon, but it was shunned by Bradley.

Having insisted on an advance to the east into the Saar, Bradley sabotaged his own and hence Montgomery's advance on a northern route by hamstringing Hodges with fuel reductions and stripping away troops. Patton's thrust might have been staggered as the "one-two punch" that Eisenhower had originally seen as the armies had turned north. The 2 September meeting had released both Patton and V Corps to resurrect 12th Army Group's southern attack as its own "main effort."

Hansen's diary records over time the evolution of Bradley's thinking that crippled the northern thrust. Bradley's mental state concerning Montgomery's influence had reached paranoic proportions and this manifested itself in Bradley's mind as battlefields geographically separated into American and British sectors. Geography and the smaller size of the 21 Army Group, however, precluded this, though Bradley still advocated it. His aide recorded Bradley's reaction to the newspaper coverage of Montgomery's "command" of ground forces:

> I get along with Monty fine enough. But, we've got to make it clear to the American public that we are no longer under any control of Monty's.

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[594] Alexander McKee, *The Race for the Rhine Bridges: 1940, 1944, 1945* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971). Part I. examines the 1940 operations in this area.

To Bradley, that meant having his own separate geographic area, and not participating in joint or complementary operations. Having encouraged his own press camp to report "his successes," Bradley, still under 21 Army Group's "operational direction," had savaged his aide for passing on a message from Montgomery inquiring of the military situation in Paris, saying, "What the devil business is that of his?" Similar outbursts followed British attempts to coordinate boundaries during the move toward Brussels. Bradley had no doubt harbored anti-British grudges since Tunisia, but Patton's never-ending rants fueled the discord in his mind. That the egocentric Montgomery seemed blissfully unaware of Bradley's hatred complicated matters, particularly when Bradley simply "listened" rather than expressing disagreement.[595]

Bradley's solution was to fight his "own" sector, the Saar. He followed another Missourian, John J. Pershing, in believing the advance to victory lay only through Lorraine. Eisenhower had agreed with Montgomery that the key approach north of the Ardennes needed more troops by placing First Army alongside 21 Army Group. When Bradley acceded to Montgomery's change in boundaries, Hodges found himself fronting on the Liege-Aachen-Cologne approach, the primary avenue named by the SHAEF planners. Hansen recorded how Bradley wanted to fight:

> Gen's [Bradley's] original plan called for supply schedule that would assign supply to Third Army, hold First [Army] in place until Third got on the Rhine. Now it is planned to shoot both armies on to the Rhine in force and for that reason it has been necessary to hold them up for

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[595] *Hansen Diary*, 25 August 1944; *Patton Diary*, passim; MHI, *Bradley Commentaries*, passim. Patton, as previously mentioned, had long advocated that Eisenhower was "over-persuaded" by Monty and that the British had sought to diminish all American influence or credit for victory. Bradley consistantly held that the British would meet no resistance in the north and that no American troops should be committed on the northern avenue. On 1 September, Hansen records Bradley as saying: "I told Ike when he was here that Monty didn't need anything to help him in his effort that [sic] what he had was plenty and that he wouldn't find any opposition going up there—that we should turn east, through [throw] everything we got into Germany and by Krist [sic] we can."

supply. When both are up to the Rhine, the force of the effort will go to the First Army which will then gain a bridgehead and together with the British Army plan to cut off an[d] isolate the Ruhr from the rest of Germany, the British fr[om] the north and we from the south. If possible, we shall extend a bridgehead on the far side of the Rhine as a base for future operations in the Third Army sector.

Thus, it was clear in 12th Army Group Headquarters that Eisenhower foresaw a double envelopment of the Ruhr, with Bradley acting in concert with 21 Army Group after Bradley's Army Group fronted on the Rhine. This meant that the much talked-about seizure of the Saar was not considered an immediate prelude to moving Patton deeper into Germany, at least as long as logistics was considered a brake on large-scale maneuver.

Noting the British success at Antwerp, Bradley intended to take over "la [sic] havre" for US use if the British could supply themselves through Antwerp. Bradley saw this not only as a major solution to his problems, but as an out that would allow him to screen and not capture Brest immediately, an objective that still defied American efforts.[596]

On 4 September, 21 Army Group's own situation offered operational possibilities outstripping those of Patton's surge to the Meuse. Dempsey's army had moved more than 250 miles in the six days since 28 August. (See figure 35.) Brussels was captured on 3 September and Antwerp on 4 September. Crerar's men were outside Le Havre and in Dieppe and St. Valery, and were moving toward Boulogne. Troops, however, were scattered and their next moves dictated by the necessity to

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[596] *Hansen Diary*, Sept. 5th.

maintain momentum rather than secure rear areas or leapfrog administrative areas forward.[597]

The 11th Armoured Division entered Antwerp, and Guards Armoured captured Louvain. Montgomery recorded:

> The situation now is that we hold a ring from the sea at ANTWERP, south-westwards through LILLE-BETHUNE-ST. POL-and along the CANCHE river to the sea at LE TOUQUET.
>
> To the north of this line are many Germans, possibly 100,000 and they cannot escape.[598]

Believing this to be the situation, he had transmitted his M.160 questioning a Double Thrust advance and reiterating his appreciation that a concentrated all-out attack be made north of the Ardennes. Tracing the "trap" in which he had just placed the German 15th Army with Dempsey, he began conceiving a replacement for the cancelled LINNET I and an alternative to the plan developed by Brereton to drop forces in the Liege-Maastricht area ahead of 12th Army Group. Bradley had wanted no part of the scheme, and Monty saw the trap in relinquishing the "reserve" granted by Eisenhower. He recorded his logic—logic that would remain steadfast for the most critical fortnight of the campaign:

> We shall have to sit back in the BRUSSELS-ANTWERP, pretending we do not mean to go towards the RUHR; if we advance openly towards the RHINE the Germans will blow the bridges—which would be awkward as north of the RUHR it is a very big river, in fact almost a sea.

Going further, he decided on a course of action:

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[597] CARL, N-13336, D.T.I. (War Office), Advance of 30 Corps Across River Seine to Brussels and Antwerp, 24 August to 4 September 1944; NAC, RG 24, Volume 10636, Report by Gen. H.D.G. Crerar covering Operations of First Canadian Army from 24th AUG-1 SEP 1944; NARA, RG 407, ML-227, Box 24145, Operation ASTONIA, Capture of Le Havre, 10-12 September 1944.

> We shall want a big airborne drop to capture the bridges over the RHINE and the MEUSE.[599]

The staff college instructor, blinded by "Maintenance of the Objective," sought a way to solve all his problems by using the marching force to gain a bridgehead across the "very big river" while maintaining his momentum toward the Ruhr. The airborne operation, called COMET, would grab a bridgehead while two corps of the Second Army moved north of the Siegfried Line and around to the rear of the objective. The unsolved problems, however, grew larger as reports filtered to his tactical headquarters.

Antwerp, the objective most desired by SCAEF, had been taken with docks and facilities intact, but it remained to be made usable. Antwerp was located at the end of the roughly 50-mile-long Scheldt Estuary, and the Germans held the banks in force but as yet, had not thoroughly mined the long approach to the harbor. Ramsay had signaled the day before, warning of the problem; Dempsey, Horrocks, and Roberts, the division commander, had not been advised of what was obvious on any map. And Horrocks, accurately stating he was no Napoleon when it came to the higher practice of war, had failed to mount an attack to cross the river before the German defenses could congeal. With Dempsey's concurrence, Horrocks pressed eastward.[600]

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[598] *Montgomery Log*, 4 September.

[599] Ibid.

[600] Love and Major, *Ramsay Diary*, 131, W0 285/10, *Dempsey Diary*, 4, 5 Sep 44; Lt. Gen. Sir B.G. Horrocks with Eversley Belfield and Maj.-Gen. H. Essame, *Corps Commander* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977) 80, 81; Maj-Gen. G.P.B. Roberts, *From the Desert to the Baltic* (London: William Kimber, 1987), 207-210; L.F. Ellis et al., *Victory in the West*, Vol. II: *The Defeat of Germany* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968), 5, 6; Major Ned Thornburn, *First Into Antwerp* (The Castle, Shrewsbury: 4th Bn K.S.L.I. Museum Trust, 1987).

Thus Antwerp was not available even for the month-long "clearing" process estimated for the estuary. Still considering his own logistics to be based on the Channel Ports which Crerar was inexorably clearing, Montgomery did not see Antwerp as an immediate objective worthy of stopping the momentum east, which would not only be stopped but would also require a forced crossing of significant size and preparation if the enemy fortified the Rhine. Nor did Montgomery see the problem as Eisenhower did. In Monty's mind, Bradley was responsible for capturing his own base and port area, and he was seen via Eisenhower's directives as moving rapidly to fully develop the ports in his own rear. [601]

The Fifteenth Army continued streaming northward from Boulogne into the "Breskens pocket" formed west of 30 Corps, and was able to cross the estuary into north Holland and behind the Rhine. Unless the estuary could be sealed from the north side, it would provide an escape route for the 100,000 troops Montgomery had thought he had bagged. The problem was that 21 Army Group was too small to handle the frontage it faced. Dempsey's 30 Corps was stretched from Antwerp to Louvain, about 30 miles. 12 Corps, Dempsey's refused left flank, had not advanced past the Scheldt south of Ghent. 8 Corps remained grounded south of the Seine. Crerar was equally stretched. 1 Corps was clearing the Le Havre peninsula and reached north on the coast to the Somme. Simonds' 2 Canadian Corps moved north of the Seine, clearing the flying bomb sites inland, and on the coast was moving on Boulogne. Ten

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[601] "Liberation Campaign," 52-64. This traces with reproductions of messages and studies the convoluted assessments of Antwerp in relation to the advance. The key belief at 21 Army Group was that the clearance of the Channel ports then being undertaken would support 21 Army Group and would be available in less time, and that operational opportunity could be sought with time to spare to open the port. Antwerp was a key issue to Bradley, who had not developed his own port; *21 Army Group Administrative History*, 34-36.

divisions covered an area of roughly 300 miles' frontage, with their main logistics base about 400 miles to the rear of the farthest elements. Germans "held" in their coastal fortresses or moving north of the estuary were estimated by Montgomery to number about 100,000 men. The German Fifteenth Army, though composed of splintered formations and stragglers, outnumbered Dempsey's spearheads.[602]

At 21 Army Group, the truer picture that soon emerged was that the situation was totally fluid at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. At no time was a clear statement of priorities from the top down more needed, yet more absent. In classic terms, the pursuit teetered on its culminating point, and only a focused shift in effort could maintain momentum in some—but not all—areas. Eisenhower's directive was obsolete upon issuance, and only Eisenhower could direct actions to achieve an operational decision somewhere. The three ground commanders in chief were helpless to achieve their individual goals with the forces and sustenance at hand. Eisenhower had thought he had "decided," but it was obvious to Montgomery that the machine would soon fail to work. Ike and Bradley, riding higher on "victory fever," ignored the signs.

Moreover, CHASTITY was permitted to die a silent death and Bradley, releasing Patton from his failure, assigned the Ninth Army Headquarters to clear Brittany. It had been a month since Patton's spearheads had reached the CHASTITY area. The key rail, road, and beaches had neither been secured nor developed. With Antwerp in the bag, Eisenhower decided that Montgomery would be responsible for

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[602] *Second Army History*, 192-197; NARA, RG 407, ML-2250, Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters, Historical Report No. 146, "Operations of First Canadian Army in North-West Europe,

providing Bradley not only with Le Havre as a port, but with Antwerp for Bradley's sustenance—despite the fact that the new American LOCs (lines of communication) would cut across Monty's LOCs at a 90 degree angle.[603]

While Dempsey shifted corps to prepare to cross the Meuse and Rhine Rivers, aiming at the Ruhr as targeted in early September, Montgomery and Eisenhower debated the strategy for the assault on the West Wall. Monty found it offensive that, as a field commander who operated out of a handful of trailers with a small staff, he would have to fly 400 miles to the rear to visit Eisenhower's 5,000-man headquarters while scores of generals, air marshals, and admirals, and more than a thousand field-grade officers existed to run Ike's battle. Eisenhower, whose nose had consistently been out of joint since Normandy, wandered SHAEF's halls publicly damning Monty to his personal staff and visited his American commanders, but had refrained from seeing 21 Army Group's commander. Avoiding personal discussion, Eisenhower characteristically sent letters and messages, perhaps fearing that many of the written statements, if presented in person, were easily open to refutation.[604]

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31 JUL-1 OCT 44," 37-43. It should be noted that by 20 September, 2 Canadian Corps would "hold" about half of 21 Army Group's total frontage.

[603] Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies, II*, 104-109.

[604] It should be an item of comment, but has escaped the criticism of American historians, that Eisenhower's aides and staff kept (and many published) diaries quoting Eisenhower's public attacks on his subordinates, Monty in particular. No such diary appeared from Monty's camp, nor is there any evidence that Monty criticized Ike or any commander in front of his junior or personal staff. While Monty kept up a frank correspondence with his superior, Brooke, Eisenhower criticized Monty in spades in private meetings with Marshall. It is also interesting that Americans consistently consider Montgomery's insistence on closed-door, private meetings only between commanders to have been snobbery on Monty's part. Private and thus frank discussions between commanders is a common practice among senior officers. Ike, the staff man, liked to be surrounded by his own staff to prevent confrontations or to divert questions that he himself could not answer. Eisenhower also told S.L.A. Marshall in a 1946 interview that he always traveled forward to visit commanders and did not prefer conferences calling his commanders rearward. In Montgomery's case, Ike had to be coaxed to visit, and Ike's preference for huge staff conferences in the rear is well documented. At its largest, SHAEF would total more than 16,000 personnel.

Considering what had transpired since his meeting with his American commanders, Eisenhower's consideration of Montgomery's M.160 had to be more carefully thought out. The reply, in fact, was drafted in toto by the staff and approved by Eisenhower. Eisenhower's "victory disease" was pronounced in this message, an appreciation which, by the time of the second part's arrival, would already be contested by Eisenhower's own G-2. Granville's communications were not expert and put Eisenhower farther out of touch with the battlefield.[605] The reply, sent on 5 September, arrived at Montgomery's headquarters on the 7th and the 9th, with the second part arriving first. This did not help matters, as the second part softened Eisenhower's reply to the concentrated thrust. By the 9th, the entire message would have read as follows:

1. While agreeing with your conception of a powerful and full blooded thrust toward Berlin, I do not repeat not agree that it should be initiated at this moment to the exclusion of all other maneuvers.
2. The bulk of the German Army that was in the west has been destroyed. We must immediately exploit our success by promptly breaching the Siegfried Line, crossing the Rhine on a wide front and seizing the Saar and the Ruhr. This I intend to do with all possible speed. This will give us a stranglehold on two of Germany's main industrial areas and largely destroy her capacity to wage war, whatever course events may take. It will assist in cutting off forces now retreating from south west France. Moreover, it will give us freedom of action to strike in any direction and will force the enemy to disperse, over a wide area, such forces as he may be able to assemble for the defense of the west.
3. While we are advancing we will be opening the ports of Havre and Antwerp, which are essential to sustain a powerful thrust deep into Germany. No re-allocation of our present resources would be adequate to sustain a thrust to Berlin.

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[605] Author interview with Col. Edward Martin, formerly senior American communications element commander, SHAEF, 1944-1945.

4. Accordingly my intention is initially to occupy the Saar and the Ruhr, and by the time we have done this, Havre and Antwerp should be available to maintain one or both of the thrusts you mention. If [In] this connection I have always given and still give priority to the Ruhr, and the northern route of advance, as indicated in my directive of yesterday which crossed your telegram. [M 160]. Locomotives and rolling stock are today being allocated on the basis of this priority to maintain the momentum of advance of your forces, and those of Bradley northwest of the Ardennes. Please let me know at once your further maintenance requirements for the advance to and occupation of the Ruhr.[606]

Montgomery had, in fact, not received Eisenhower's 4 September directive until the 6th, and immediately signaled Eisenhower concerning it:

> You can rely on 21 ARMY GROUP to go all out 100 percent to further your intention to destroy enemy forces.[607]

Montgomery was convinced, as his 8 Corps still lacked transport to move and his two armies operated with two open flanks, that if the Ruhr was to be struck before the enemy withdrew into the Siegfried Line, it would require a concentrated assault, an assault his own two-corps 2 Army was not strong enough to deliver immediately. He also knew, from his liaison to Bradley, that Bradley's forces were both dispersed and shy of supply, rendering their "run to the Rhine" certain to fail. In the meantime, Montgomery shifted corps, hoped to seal the bleeding trap north of the Scheldt, and to rush the Allied Airborne Army into a coup-de-main of the Meuse and Rhine bridges.

As enemy resistance stiffened, and the final (first) part of Eisenhower's signal arrived, Montgomery immediately replied, calling the question on priority:

> Have now received the whole of your Directive No. FWD-13889 dated 5 Sept.

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[606] EL, Correspondence File, Cable 5 September; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2120.

[607] EL, Correspondence File, M-169, 6 Sept. 1944.

Have studied your directive No. FWD-13765 [4 September] carefully and cannot see it stated that the northern route of advance to the RUHR is to have priority over the eastern advance to the SAAR. Actually, XIX US Corps is unable to advance properly for lack of petrol. Could you send a responsible Staff Officer to see me so that I can explain things to him. [608]

Bradley had never published another directive modifying his offensive listed in his own Letter of Instruction No. Six, dated 25 August. His Letter of Instructions No. Five had merely shifted responsibility for Brittany to the Ninth Army. Moreover, it had now become apparent that, besides grounding XIX Corps, Bradley had shifted an infantry division from the primary avenue of advance to Patton's southern flank. It was intuitively obvious, even in Granville, that an assault on the east face of the Ruhr would need a complementary attack through the Liege-Maastricht-Aachen avenue. Despite his presence at the 2 September meeting authorizing the move, it is probable that Eisenhower did not know that First Army's assault on the West Wall was leaving behind a corps. This fact, plus the planning for COMET, the crisis of supply, and Montgomery's insistence that a priority following the text-book definition of the Main Effort be made, forced Eisenhower to act. He went forward. Crippled with a bad knee, he flew to Brussels in his C-47 Dakota to meet Monty. [609]

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[608] EL, Correspondence File, M-181, 9 September 1944.

[609] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, Map No. 5, LIEGE-AACHEN-DUREN; EL, Smith Collection of World War II Documents, SHAEF War Room Summaries, September 1-10 1944; *Montgomery Log*, 9 September 1944.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Going To MARKET

COMET was intended to solve multiple strategic and operational conundra. It addressed the greatest strategic objective, the rapid destruction of the enemy's capability to resist by offering a quick bounce across the Rhine; it provided for the envelopment of the remaining enemy clinging to the coast; and it promised the establishment of strong forces within striking distance of the Ruhr without having to penetrate and reduce any portion of the Siegfried Line. Moreover, it was the boldest use of airborne forces by the Allies yet seen in the European theater. But it was not a unique solution, nor was it even uniquely British, though it would be a 1 Airborne Corps show. It was a multiple-bridge coup de main combined with a rapid ground advance of a heavily armored corps. The Germans had shown the way in 1940, and it had become part of Montgomery's repetoire.

Montgomery had attached airborne forces to practice bridge coup-de-main operations while he commanded 5 Corps in England in 1941. No doubt inspired by the Eben Emael and Holland operations of May 1940, Montgomery had been the first senior British officer to include airborne forces in exercises in World War II. In the invasion of Sicily in 1943, he planned three brigade-sized bridge coup-de-main operations to speed Eighth Army's passage on the main route running up the eastern coast: for 1 Airlanding Brigade at the Ponte Grande Bridge near Syracuse, for the 2 Parachute Brigade to capture the road bridge south of Augusta, and for 1 Parachute Brigade to capture the Ponti di Primesole Bridge over the Simeto River south of Catania, which would link with a sea-landed Commando force. While the 2 Parachute

Brigade mission was canceled, the other two were launched and achieved mixed results. Bad navigation, gliders separating from their tows, and the shooting down of friendly aircraft by the Allied navies plagued the missions. Both bridges were captured and temporarily held, but in both cases the airborne were forced to relinquish their captures due to the failure of the ground linkup force to speedily reach their objectives as they fought up the narrow Sicilian road. While the Ponte Grande bridge was temporarily lost and then almost immediately recaptured as the ground forces arrived, the second objective was also retaken intact by 13 Corps as the removal of charges by the airborne troops from the Primesole Bridge likewise saved it from destruction. The lessons of the operation were not lost. Ironically, one of the battalions at the Primesole Bridge was commanded by Lt. Col. John Frost, and the linking corps was commanded by Lt. Gen. M.C. Dempsey.[610]

American airborne commander Matthew B. Ridgway's hard feelings against the British began in Sicily. Additionally, the lack of training of the aircrew involved and the differences in forces also created perceptions that were later hard to dispel, and in some cases, never were.[611]

A coup de main of the Orne River bridges had also been a primary feature of the 6th British Airborne Division's Normandy operation.[612] The idea of capitalizing on

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[610] Field Marshal Sir B.L. Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro* (Germany: British Army of the Rhine, 1946), 96-101; Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General*, 309-310; Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 119-123, 125-130; *Airborne Missions in the Med*, 41-55; Dover, *The Sky Generals*, 72-79; Maj.-Gen. John Frost, *A Drop Too Many* (London: Buchan and Enright, 1982), Chapter 12, passim.

[611] Dover, *The Sky Generals*, ibid.

[612] NARA, RG 331, Entry 256, Box 37, Report on the British Airborne Effort in Operation 'NEPTUNE' by 38 and 46 Groups, RAF, 11, passim; Lt. Gen. Sir R.N. Gale, *With the Sixth Airborne in Normandy* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1948), Chapter Four, passim; Steven E. Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); John C. Warren, *Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater*, USAF Historical Studies: No. 97 [hereafter

the airborne to negate water hazards while maintaining the momentum into Germany appears to have been solely Montgomery's, not that of his plans staff or the staff of 1 Airborne Corps. At the moment Antwerp was being captured, Montgomery had completed conceptualizing an airborne operation to replace LINNET.

Initiation of the operation followed the methodology that had been standard with Montgomery since Normandy and by First Allied Airborne Army since August. On 3 September, Monty and Dempsey discussed an airborne operation to support 30 Corps' mission of securing a bridgehead on the Rhine between WESEL and NIJMEGEN. The next day Dempsey met Browning, De Guingand, and Miles Graham at 2 Army's headquarters to discuss the capture of "NIJMEGEN and ARNHEM." The following day, this orders group met Montgomery. Browning, De Guingand, and Graham discussed the concept, after which Browning reported to Dempsey to finalize details. Dempsey, under whose Army 1 Airborne Corps would operate once dropped, and who would assign a corps for the ground phase and linkup, took control of the details of the ground plan. Browning then returned to First Allied Airborne Army to develop the outline plan into a coordinated operation.[613] The airborne troops for COMET would come from 1 Airborne Corps, and the airlift would be supplied by RAF 38 and 46 Groups under Air Marshal Hollinghurst. Because COMET was a "British operation," Brereton, Parks, and the American-dominated staff at Sunninghill

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referred to as Warren, *Airborne Operations, European Theater*] (Maxwell A.F.B., Ala.: Air University, 1956), 78-80.

[613] NAC, RG 24, Volume 20402, File 969.(D24), "Operations-2nd British Army Sep/Dec 44," 21 Army Group TOPSEC Most Immediate Cipher Message No. D/19, 3 SEP 44; *Dempsey Diary*, 3-5 SEP 44; *Montgomery Log*, 4 September. The date for COMET's main attack (ground phase) was now 7 September, permitting a full day attack to the Eindhoven area prior to a dusk coup de main, which had originally been scheduled for 6 September. As with every planned airborne operation since NEPTUNE, the dates would continue to slip.

Park did not involve themselves in modifying detail or in "approving" the concept. Instead, they worked to support the Field Marshal's plan. XVIII Corps, would remain free to support Bradley. (See figure 38.)

Montgomery had approved Dempsey's outline plan on 5 September and recorded it in his log:

> (a) 30 Corps, with Gds. Armd. Div. and 11 Armd Div. leading, start off at 0700 hrs. on 7 Sept. from LOUVAIN and ANTWERP areas. The movement is northeast, directed on EINDHOVEN and BREDA.
>
> (b) The 1 British Airborne Div. plus the Polish Para. Bde., will be landed on the evening of 7 Sept. (before dark) in the general area ARNHEM-NIJMEGEN-GRAVE to seize the bridges over the RHINE and MEUSE.
>
> (c) If the weather is bad and the airborne forces cannot operate, then 30 Corps will not go beyond the line EINDHOVEN-BREDA. The corps will advance beyond this line when the air forces drop.
>
> (d) Gds. Armd. Div. will be directed on GRAVE-NIJMEGEN-ARNHEM.
>
> (e) 11 Armd. Div. will be directed on BREDA-TILBURG-HERTOGENBOSCH, and on to the RHINE crossing to the north.
>
> (f). 12 Corps to take over ANTWERP and left flank protection.[614]

Montgomery was relying on surprise to make the coup de main, but his ground plan still relied upon some forces turning toward Breda and thence toward Rotterdam, as specified in his M.523. The main force would go east between Wesel and Arnhem, with the Americans on the right. COMET supported this plan; it did not signal a longer drive northwards on the right flank except to get over the Rhine and behind the

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[614] *Montgomery Log*, 5 September.

Siegfried Line on the enemy's right flank. 12 Corps would keep the enemy from escaping from the Antwerp area.[615]

COMET proceeded, basing the force on 1 Airborne Division, commanded by Major-General R.E. "Roy" Urquhart. FAAA had been notified of the new operation on the evening of 3 September, shortly after LINNET II's cancellation. 21 Army Group had that day explored planning for an airborne operation for seizing Rotterdam, but this had been set aside for COMET. While one half of LINNET's airlift was released for air transport, the remainder was dedicated to the air drop for the new operation. On 4 September, FAAA issued a directive to Browning formally initiating planning for COMET.[616]

> Directive "Operation on the River RHINE," dated 4 September, said:
>
> [Y]ou will immediately prepare detailed plans for an airborne operation along the River RHINE between ARNHEM and WESEL.

Following the American practice, it designated a "mission":

> Land in such areas as will permit of your seizing intact and controlling all bridges and ferries over the River RHINE and its branch from ARNHEM to WESEL, both inclusive.[617]

The air planning for COMET encountered a snag not seen since the Normandy drop—the consideration of enemy air defenses as a primary factor. The day before, US P-47 fighter-bombers flying at 1,200 feet along the planned LINNET air routes had

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[615] M.523; *Dempsey Diary*, 5 SEP 44.

[616] *Parks Diary*, 3, 4 September 1944. It should be remembered that Brereton and Browning still had not "mended fences" over Browning's 3 September protest over LINNET II's planned execution. See Chapter Four. The formality of FAAA's directive to plan COMET established that FAAA had accepted the plan in principle. Brereton, as ever, retained his power to "veto" any plan.

[617] NARA, RG 331, 1st AAA, "Operation Comet," Operation on the River RHINE, First Allied Airborne Army, 4 September 1944.

been heavily damaged by ground fire believed to be from enemy motor columns retreating toward Germany. This led Air Vice Marshal Hollinghurst at the air planning conference to estimate that C-47 losses for COMET would be 40 percent. The Airborne Army's Chief of Staff and Operations both stated that such losses were unacceptable,

> unless the Commander-in-Chief [of 21 Army Group] demanded the mission as absolutely necessary to the success of his movement north of the Ruhr.[618]

While the ongoing planning modified the concept eliminating a possible drop at Wesel and substituting Arnhem, the Allied Airborne Army also awaited the removal of 46 Group's aircraft to the Mediterranean for a mission to Greece. Simultaneously, FAAA moved ahead on their own initiative with a plan to propose to SHAEF to drop the US XVIII Corps (Airborne) behind the Siegfried Line near Cologne. They also worked on Brereton's pet project, moving the US airborne corps onto the continent in the Paris area. What was telling about this diversity of interests while under notification for planning an "Op" was that debate erupted between CATOR and FAAA as to whether the RAF groups were actually assigned and not merely tasked by the Allied Airborne Army. CATOR believed that they were assigned to FAAA. The Allied Airborne Army stated that they had heard such, but had never seen an authorizing document. Thus, not being sure of its own assigned organizations, Brereton's headquarters referred the problem

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[618] *Parks Diary*, 4 September 1944, Conference Notes of Meeting in Chief of Staff's Office, 4 September 1944. The conference notes indicate the G-3 stated that, "the Ruhr operation was not very feasible due to intense flak, and the distance was at the limit of operations—too far for [double-tows] gliders to be brought in." Bad weather prevented an immediate aerial photographic run of the area. This was done on 6 September.

> to AEAF, SHAEF, and the groups concerned to see if authority is firm.[619]

The ground chain of command had no such problem focusing. Functioning more as a corps commander in Second Army than the spare wheel in an operation that consistently downplayed the importance of the ground battle—the raison d'etre of the airborne—Lt. Gen. Browning worked with Urquhart and the Polish commander, Major-General Stanislaw Sosabowski. Browning had four brigade-sized elements for the initial drop and had planned to bring in 52d Lowland Division in an airlanding operation to reinforce the northern airhead on D+2.

Intelligence given to the Airborne Corps from First Allied Airborne Army was general and contained little that was useful for operational planning. Mirroring the SHAEF intelligence estimates and spreading victory fever, it almost seemed to be published "for the encouragement of others." On 4 September, FAAA noted:

> Enemy still appears incapable of halting Allied advances now nearing German frontiers. Appreciate enemy must make supreme effort to slow down the pace of withdrawal in order to gain time for refurbishing of West Wall defenses. Latter badly neglected and depleted of large proportion fire power but still considerable obstacle. Probable that enemy will attempt to withdraw proportion of infantry and armour into reserve, while covering with expendable infantry, but at present no evidence that enemy can disengage.[620]

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[619] *Parks Diary*, 5 September 1944, Notes of meeting in Chief of Staff's Office, 5 September 1944; *Marshall Papers, IV*, 572. The commitment of US aircraft for this Churchill-inspired mission to Greece had personally been opposed by Gen. Marshall. Brereton had wanted to substitute US aircraft for the committed British aircraft so as not to shift aircraft already preparing for an operation. It is an interesting commentary that the use of 100 transport aircraft had reached the Combined Chiefs of Staff level for decision and had drawn firm guidance personally to Eisenhower how to act in the matter.

[620] NARA, RG 331, Entry 253, Box 3, FAAA, General File, 319.1, First Allied Airborne Army, G-2 Summary No. 1, 4 September 1944, 2. FAAA's intelligence section was apparently the last section to be filled. Air intelligence was obtained through Wing and Group Channels from IX Troop Transport Command or the RAF Groups/Air Ministry Channels. Ground intelligence provided to the divisions was from parent headquarters as assigned, and there are no records indicating a competent, functioning G-2 operation at this time that could assist the divisions in planning other than their drop zones.

1 Airborne Corps estimated that the German forces in 21 Army Group's sector were withdrawing to the Siegfried Line behind the general line Aachen-Ruhr. They believed that "low-quality" coastal divisions were withdrawing to the area north and northeast of Arnhem. Though intelligence for the area along the River Rhine and north of the river estimated the flak to be "very considerable," 1 Airborne Corps believed that 30 Corps' advance would negate the flak south of the river as and as far east as Tilburg.

1 Airborne Corps noted that 30 Corps would "adjust" its advance from its staging areas, "so that the surprise of the Airborne landings will not be prejudiced." Browning announced as his intention that 1 Airborne Corps

> will seize and hold the bridges at the following places:
> (i) Over the MAAS at GRAVE
> (ii) Over the RHINE at NIJMEGEN
> (iii) Over the NEDER RIJN at ARNHEIM [sic]
> so as to pass through the GUARDS Armoured Division.

Browning's plan incorporated concepts previously planned for TRANSFIGURE and LINNET. The basic concept remained a surprise airborne drop with a rapid linkup by advancing ground forces. 30 Corps would assume command of 1 Airborne Corps upon linkup, with both corps under 2 Army. As the northernmost bridgehead was the key to the operation, 1 Airborne Division would concentrate at Arnhem as soon as possible after the bridges were secure, while the Polish Parachute Brigade held the Nijmegen area. Both TRANSFIGURE and LINNET were concerned with seizing and controlling areas during a fluid tactical situation; COMET required a different approach to battle. According to the published plan, beginning at 0600 on 8

September, three coup-de-main parties each in six Horsa gliders would independently seize one of the designated bridges, holding the structure until relieved. Two-thirds of the 1 Airborne Division would arrive by parachute at 0800 in the first lift, carrying out parachute drops for 90 minutes. The second lift, including the remainder of the division, 1 Polish Brigade, and the corps headquarters, would arrive either in the evening or early the following morning. The 52 Division would arrive by air landing on an airfield improvised by 30 Corps on D+2 (10 September).[621]

The planned landing and drop zones reflected the compromise required between seizing the objective and finding suitable terrain for large-scale glider and parachute landings. Flak was an overriding concern, determining not just the routing of aircraft but also landing- and drop-zone selection. Recognizing the need to capture the bridges by surprise to prevent their destruction or reinforcement, the coup-de-main teams were subjected to the highest risks. Two hundred eighty-one aircraft for parachute troops and 368 glider tugs would comprise the first lift, and 114 parachute, 323 gliders, and 144 supply aircraft would make up the second lift. The third and fourth lifts would bring in the balance of the Polish Brigade, aviation engineers, the main component of the corps headquarters, additional signals, and the 52 (L) Division. Urquhart's 1 Airborne, with 1 Polish Parachute Brigade under command, would need 360 tons of supplies per day, and 52 (L) Division would be supplied commensurate with its own landing, eventually to require an additional 220 tons daily. Parachute aircraft would be flown by the US IX Troop Carrier Command's 52nd Wing, and

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[621] MHI, *Papers Collected by Major General F.L. Parks*, "Operation Comet," Hq/Atps/2559/G, 6 Sep 44, HQ Airborne Troops OP Instruction No. 1. Browning's order noted, "There will be no advance [of Second Army] from the RHINE bridgeheads before a port between HAVRE and ANTWERP is operating."

glider tows would be flown by the RAF 38 and 46 Groups. During the actual mission, all known flak positions along the corridor would be attacked by 8th Air Force and aircraft from the Air Defence of Great Britain.[622]

Two parachute "drop zones" (DZs) and four glider landing zones (LZs) were planned. The target area of Arnhem and Nijmegen was split by the Rhine (Neder Rijn), Waal, and Maas rivers that flow gradually from about 30 feet above sea level in the east to below sea level in the west. The land itself is polder, lowland reclaimed from the sea by dikes or dams. Southeast of Nijmegen the polder rises to 275 feet, and northeast of Arnhem it reaches 360 feet. Scattered patches of woodland are north and northwest of Arnhem and south, southeast, and southwest of Nijmegen.[623]

North of the Rhine, LZ "S" and DZ "X" were assigned for the Arnhem Bridge. Located approximately five miles west-northwest of the city of Arnhem, they were located amidst heavy woods that would mask their view from the city. (See figure 39.) LZ "S" lay between the Amsterdam-Arhem Highway and was bisected by the Amsterdam-Arnhem railway. DZ "X" adjoined the LZ to the south and was between the highway and the Neder River north of the town of Heelsum. The terrain was generally flat.[624]

DZ "Y" was a triangular drop zone pointing eastward, located five miles south of Nijmegen in the "Y" formed by the Maas-Waal Canal and the Maas River. (See

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[622] NARA. RG 331, 1AAA, Operation Comet, Supply Dropping COMET, 9 Sept 44, IX TCC, 1, 2; HQ AirTps/TS/2559/G, 7 Sep 44, Total Aircraft required for Coup-de-Main, 1st and 2nd Lifts; Field Orders for 52d Wing and 38th Group, passim. The landing areas for 52d (Lowland) were either to be improvised airstrips built by the American 878th Aviation Engineer Battalion or Deelen Airfield (northeast of Arnhem), if captured.

[623] NARA. RG 331, 1AAA, Operation Comet, Hq. 52nd T.C. Wing, 6 September 1944, F.O. No. 6, Annex 1, Intelligence, 1.

figure 40.) Located in a northeast-southwest line approximately eight miles south-southeast of Nijmegen in a wooded tract were LZ's "U", "Z" and "L." "Z" was just east of Grosbeek; "U" was south of Grosbeek and east of Mook, and "L" lay between the highway and the Maas River.[625]

Urquhart's plan was for 1 Parachute Brigade to reinforce and hold the Arnhem bridgehead after the bridge was seized by coup de main. They would land on DZ "X." 4 Parachute Brigade, landing on DZ "Y," would relieve the coup-de-main force at the Grave Bridge and cover the MAAS river bridgehead. 1 Airlanding Brigade, landing on LZ "Z," would relieve the coup-de-main party at the Nijmegen Bridge and hold the Waal bridgehead. The Polish Brigade would land on DZ "P" in the second lift to relieve 4 Parachute Brigade at Grave. When relieved by 30 Corps, 1 Airborne Division would concentrate between Arnhem and Elst, with 1 Polish Airborne in the vicinity of Nijmegen. The Independent Parachute Company would mark drop and landing zones prior to the main drops, and the Divisional Recce Squadron would reinforce the coup-de-main parties at the Arnhem and Nijmegen bridges.[626]

The actual coup-de-main plan was the hardest to fulfill. Browning sent Dempsey an immediate message concerning the coup-de-main parties, saying:

> In view of complete lack of LZs and DZs near bridges after study of maps and photos on my return here consider it essential to land coup de main glider parties on each bridge night 7/8 Sep. Then bring in first main lift airborne force early daylight 8 Sep otherwise surprise

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[624] Ibid.

[625] Ibid.; John Baynes, *Urqhuart of Arnhem: The Life of Major General R.E. Urquhart, CB, DSO* (New York: Brassey's, 1993), 78, 79. Of some note is the absence of comparison of the drop zones accepted by Urquhart for COMET and later those used in MARKET, both in his own book and in his biographer's life.

[626] PRO. WO 171-393, 1 Airborne Division Operation Instruction No. 8, Confirmatory Notes On Division Commanders Verbal Orders.

> impossible. Must warn you that strong protest against latter has been lodged here by Air C in C.[627]

Argument over the tactics of bridge seizure, the role of surprise, daylight or night assaults, and the air plan would resurface within several days, and the basic concept for COMET would change still again. Dempsey had meanwhile refined with Browning the plan to include the seizure of a bridge over the Meuse near Neebosch to permit flexibility within the target area. Dempsey at this time still recognized that 12 Corps would contain the Fifteenth Army, but that during COMET, "maintaining a strong left flank" and "speed is essential" were predominant considerations.[628]

Horrocks' 30 Corps Operation Instruction No. 23 Operation "COMET" outlined the crucial ground linkup to 1 Airborne Corps:

> 30 Corps will advance to and secure a bridgehead over the RHINE in the area WEST of incl NIJMEGEN and dominate the area to the NORTH.

Horrocks' plan stated that using two armored divisions, an infantry division, and an armored brigade,

> 30 Corps will advance with Guards Armd Div right, 11 Armd Div left. 50(N) Div move forward by bounds on 11 Armd Div Route.[629]

Horrocks' corps would have some 800 tanks and, with all arms and services included, approximately 100,000 men. For this force, he designated two axes of advance, "Club"

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[627] PRO. WO 205/192 (153751) Topsec Cipher Message D/57 of 7 SEP 44. The original plans called for a coup de main at 0430 hours followed by the parachute dropping of main force at 0800. Later plans for 10 September moved glider assault to 0600. The fact that Leigh Mallory was approving and disapproving plans for transports indicates that AEAF was still considered part of the airborne approval process as part of the mid-August agreements. Leigh Mallory's own influence, however, was rapidly waning.

[628] NAC. RG 24. Volume 20420, File 969.(D24), Second Army, Minutes of Chief of Staff's Conference. 5 September 1944; *Dempsey Diary*, 5 Sep 44.

[629] PRO. WO 171-341, 30 Corps Operation Instruction No. 23 Operation "COMET," 6 Sep 44.

and "Diamond." Club Route, the Corps' right avenue and the track for Guards Armoured, would later bear an ominous tale: It followed the main road from Mech-Gheel-Arendonk-Eindhoven-St.Oderode-Nijmegen-Arnhem-Apeldorn. The 11th Armoured's "Diamond" Route began after a trip from Antwerp to pick up the road from Tilburg-Hertogenbosch-Zaltbommel-Tiel-Renkum-Ede. Within two days of the order's issuance and with the stiffening of resistance, Horrocks shifted 50th Division to "Diamond" with the 11th Armoured to trail Guards Armoured up the Corps "centre-line." Horrocks apparently saw resistance as stiffer closer to Antwerp than on his outside flank toward Germany, an assessment that later would prove true.[630]

Though Horrocks' mission was essential, the airborne plan was the key to success. While 30 Corps' double thrust to the north would assure wrapping up the Fifteenth Army and establishing a base north of the Rhine, Holland's multiple waterways could easily be used to form defense lines to break the momentum of any advance. With off-road vehicular movement hampered by the water-laced polderland, the necessity for rapid movement to prevent defense lines from stabilizing was crucial. Only a simultaneous surprise strike by airborne forces could accomplish this. Most critical was the simultaneous seizure of bridges and key areas, not simply to prevent their destruction but to freeze all movement of enemy reserves within the battle area. By constricting the enemy's arteries deep within their own rear, the ability to mount counterattacks, to form blocking positions, and switch lines, or to reinforce defended localities would be eliminated or degraded while aiding the momentum of the Allied

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[630] Ibid. The standard configuration for an armored division was 246 cruiser tanks and 44 lights. The independent armored brigade possessed 190 cruiser tanks and 33 lights. "Club Route" was the centre-line name used by 30 Corps throughout the Northwest Europe campaign.

advance. Often lost on analysts, this form of ground interdiction could be accomplished only by the seizure of the bridges and roads specified in the plan as well as dominating the sectors assigned to the airborne divisions.

Most ominous for the Allies was the transfer to the north of the First Parachute Army under General Kurt Student, the founder of the German Fallschirmjaeger (paratroops). German commanders had been drilled since before the Normandy invasion that immediate and violent response to any parachute incursion was critical to prevent an air-delivered enemy from forming up, seizing their objectives, and/or establishing defensive blocks. No man was more imbued with this philosophy and could transfer it to his subordinates in more rapid orders than Student. First Parachute Army would take control of the remnants of the retreating forces to the immediate west of the intended target area. Though ULTRA decrypts identified both Student and his command as early as 6 September, these identifications did not appear in 2 Army's Intelligence Summary until 16 September, and not before MARKET in the intelligence of 21 Army Group, who published no summaries from 12 to 18 September. Unit identifications on the Albert Canal did appear on 8 and 9 September in Second Army intelligence.[631]

The plans for COMET, expected to be executed with only 72 hours' preparation, were simple in concept and based on the expectation that 30 Corps would force a penetration, and that the coup-de-main parties would be reinforced by the main force of paratroops, who in turn, would be quickly reached by the armor. Daring in

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[631] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, 382; Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 104, 16 September 1944, 1. SHAEF did not show 1 Parachute Army in its 9 September Weekly Summary No. 25, but showed it in the following week's published Order of Battle Map.

concept, COMET relied heavily upon the belief that the enemy forces in depth were retreating, not under command of formations, and in organizational and moral disarray. Second Army's Intelligence Summary No. 91 for 3 September asked and answered a key question:

> The whereabouts of enemy armour is still somewhat of a mystery, and it has not put in an appearance on Second Army front today. It is probably moving back to GERMANY on our right flank.
>
> There is no sign of any German stand in a big way but we must presume all possible will be done to defend the frontiers of the REICH.[632]

Reports of thousands of prisoners taken daily indicated that the enemy was indeed fragmented, its formations splintered, and the strength of the enemy within the Siegfried Line inconclusive, though no reserve formations within Germany were identified. On one day, Second Army's PW cages processed prisoners from 40 separate German formations.[633] With the American victory at the "Mons Pocket" and Crerar's advance beginning to ring Calais and Boulogne, Second Army noted five divisions trapped in the remainder of Belgium and offered little hope for Fifteenth Army to escape "by land."[634]

Weather delayed COMET but Horrocks believed that 30 Corps should have attacked immediately, since they had fuel for a 100-mile advance. In retrospect, at least one airborne commander would regret that an advance as far as Zon had not been

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[632] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 91, Up to 2400 hrs, 3 September 1944, 1, 2. This was, in fact, precisely correct.

[633] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 93, 5 September 1944, 1.

[634] Second Army Intelligence Summary Nos. 94, 95, 6-7 September 1944.

attempted immediately, thus shortening the run to the Rhine planned for Guards Armoured.[635]

The issue of seizing the bridges before they could be blown, however, remained paramount. The Germans had proven to be among the world's best military engineers. Their leaving a series of key bridges intact along the line of advance, simply, was something that no one believed would ever be possible. Moreover, the Germans had already initiated engineering reinforcement of the terrain defenses. Extensive defensive inundations were made along the coast from Calais to the mouth of the Scheldt and along the major rivers running through northwest Belgium past Ghent and as far as Antwerp. The effect was not only to form barriers to offensive operations to capture the coastal ports, but also to separate Dempsey's forces by inundations within his sector.[636]

The decision for COMET made late on 3 September was for a temporary halt of the Second Army, with the promise of a quick advance planned to begin on 6 September. This was delayed in stages to the 7th, 8th and then the 10th. As with LINNET, the airborne was the sticking point. Moreover, COMET had shifted the line of advance northwards on two mutually supporting routes, off-balancing the due-eastward offensive by Second Army that was previously meant to be tightly tied with First US Army's assault. Hodges' assault, however, had been stopped in XIX Corps sector by lack of fuel. A gap was developing to the south and east, while intelligence

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[635] Brian Horrocks, *Escape to Action* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), 205; Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Sosabowski. *Freely I Served* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1982), 194.

[636] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 89, 1 September 1944, Summary No. 91, 3 September 1944. Both contain extensive maps and studies of water obstacles in Belgium and Southern Holland.

now warned that the Fifteenth Army's trapped troops were moving north of the Neder Rijn into northwest Holland.

ULTRA had warned on 5 September that Fifteenth Army had been given orders to maintain coastal fortresses at Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, Walcheren Island and Flushing Harbor, the Antwerp bridgehead, and along the entire Albert Canal line to Maastricht. While these orders had been transmitted on 3 September—the day before Antwerp's capture—decrypts clarifying these orders were not transmitted to 21 Army Group until late on 5 September and on 6 September, the day originally meant for COMET's debut. On 7 September, decrypts provided Montgomery information that Walcheren was to be fortified and that Fifteenth Army would conduct a fighting withdrawal to defend the line Zeebruge-Bruges-Ghent as well as to begin crossing troops at usable ferries. Mines and attempts to block the estuary were to begin on 8 September. On the same day, intelligence warned that 25,000 troops had already crossed northward.[637] (See figure 41.)

Intelligence also warned that COMET's progress would be more heavily contested. Second Army's Intelligence noted that:

> there are more enemy troops between the ALBERT Canal and the lower RHINE than there were three days ago. In this connection it is worth pointing out that enemy rail communications in Western GERMANY have not yet been pulverised to the same extent as they were in Northern France. . . .
>
> Ferries across the Scheldt are doing a roaring trade, and all of 15th Army that can get away is making North across the river. The enemy's intention is reasonably plain: enough must be left to keep us out of the ports...and to hold a perimeter south of the SCHELDT, but apart from these forces, all the remainder of 15th Army that are to fight again must

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[637] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part. 2, 378-379.

somehow cross the river. Targets galore are likely to be presented to our Air Forces in the process.[638]

COMET, originally meant to be executed on 6 September, was changed for late on the 7th or early the next morning on the 8th. Weather was the culprit causing the delay, along with additional preparation needed by the airborne. The "36-hour" preparation rule handily adopted by Brereton was always unreasonable. Intelligence, mapping, briefings, and rehearsals for ground troops took time, as well as the normal troop-leading steps needed to prepare division- and corps-sized operations. This included the shifting, staging, and movement of "sea tails" and "ground tails," the huge truck and baggage train needed to support immobile airborne divisions when linked to ground forces. Brereton had downplayed this, and his own staff, dominated by the concept that an airborne operation is merely an air operation to which ground troops are attached, and whose needs are subordinated to the air, unwittingly courted disaster. These delays now meant that Montgomery could not react to the Fifteenth Army's moves without negating his investment in time lost in halting while awaiting COMET's preparation, in the belief that it would be repaid in large operational gains.

As LINNET II demonstrated, Brereton was a sloppy planner who overestimated his headquarters' ability to adequately prepare plans.[639] He rushed

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[638] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 96, 8 September 1944.

[639] Author interview with Lt. Gen. E.R. Quesada, 24 October 1984, at the Staff College. Quesada stressed that Brereton showed little or no attention to detail and left strong subordinates alone as long as he (Brereton) looked good. It is also known that Arnold considered Brereton "a loose cannon." Most anti-Brereton material (which is substantial) is anecdotal. He left a remarkably clean paper trail and his correspondence with or private files in Arnold's papers are sparse enough to encourage the belief that the file had been sanitized. Bradley disliked and had little respect for Brereton, particularly after COBRA. It has also been said that Brereton and Coningham had poor relations. Brereton had a checkered past with the British, had actually supported Monty at Alamein, but had been "shamed" into leaving the India theater due to his personal conduct. Brereton's competence and his role in the loss of the American Air Force in the Philippines have been defended by Dr. Roger G. Miller of the Air Force History Office, who is preparing a biography.

additional studies while his staff should have focused on COMET, particularly issues of counterflak, intelligence, and the actual mechanics of seizure of objectives. He offered a huge menu of half-baked selections designed to fit the appetite of the moment.

As COMET ground forward, additional planning on other operations continued. Montgomery's headquarters inquired as to the feasibility of an airborne operation to clear Walcheren Island and solve the Antwerp problem, a study immediately shelved by First Allied Airborne Army as unworkable for airborne troops. Called INFATUATE, the plan later became a First Canadian Army mission.[640]

The additional plans were the product of Ridgway's desire (with Brereton's blessing) to use the XVIII Corps (Airborne) under a US flag against objectives in Bradley's sector. NAPLES I and II were planned in First Army's area beyond the Siegfried Line east of Aachen and to establish a bridgehead on the Rhine near Cologne; MILAN I and MILAN II were in the Third Army sector and included a Siegfried Line breach near Trier and a Rhine crossing near Coblenz. Also in Patton's area were CHOKER I and CHOKER II, featuring a Siegfried Line breach near Saarbrucken and a Rhine crossing between Mainz and Mannheim.[641] The plans for the First Army area were all hatched in outline form during the month of September. Simultaneous to this planning, of some import, is the SHAEF/First Allied Airborne Army connection concerning TALISMAN, regarding an airborne strike on Berlin's

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[640] *Brereton Diaries*, 340-341.

[641] Ibid.; CMH, MS, "History of the First Allied Airborne Army, 2 August 1944-20 May 1945" [hereafter referred to as "FAAA History"], 61-66. Details of these operations are found in the specific file folders in RG 331, 1AAA, 381 Plans. Additional material is found alphabetically in CMH, MS Chronology of Notes. The MILAN/CHOKER series were proposed in October and November.

airfields and the naval base at Kiel in the event of a German surrender. Airborne planning was initiated for this contingency in September based on the release of SHAEF's updated contingency plan in the event of a collapse of Germany. Thus, Brereton's headquarters, in fear it might not be prepared for a future operation, rarely focused on the job at hand. [642]

While TRANSFIGURE, LINNET I and II, and the early plans showed that Brereton was quick to approve concepts and offer his own ideas, he did not appear to connect these operations to ground operations at the time. He personally grasped little of campaign planning and was buffeted by the whims and kibitzs of Tedder, who increasingly saw the airborne forces as his personal preserve; by Bull at SHAEF, who felt Eisenhower's eagerness to deploy the force; by Ridgway, who interpreted Bradley for him and who continuously attempted "to sell" airborne plans at 12th Army Group; and most importantly by Arnold, who wondered why his "airborne army," a desired piece in his future independent air force, was not winning the war through air-delivered troops, a new form of airpower.

Eisenhower and his staff, meanwhile, had offered no guidance. Brereton also continually pressed to move First Allied Airborne's headquarters and its troops on to the continent near Paris. This reflected not only Brereton's view that he would be a player on the scene, but the fact that FAAA, by default, could not operate from British

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[642] Ibid. This plan was later called ECLIPSE.

bases in much of 12th Army Group's sector. Leaving the airborne in England meant being condemned to Montgomery's sole control for operations.[643]

Hitherto, Browning had been the principal airborne planner. His views had dominated most of the pre-NEPTUNE ideas at 21 Army Group, and he was relied upon heavily by both Montgomery and, by default, Brereton, whenever operations were planned in Montgomery's sector. BENEFICIARY, TRANSFIGURE, LINNET I, and LINNET II were all 1 Airborne Corps assignments.[644] Detailed planning for these operations had been finalized by Browning's staff with the respective air transport commanders, most notably Air Vice Marshal Hollinghurst. Now, Major General Paul L. Williams (IX Troop Carrier Command), recently returned from commanding the ANVIL airborne operations, had been inserted within the advisory chain for COMET.[645]

The ground battle in Second Army's area continued to affect the COMET operation. The unrelenting pursuit of 30 Corps had inflicted more than 40,000 casualties on the enemy for a loss of less than 1,400 men and 42 tanks. Dempsey had to contend with the simultaneous requirements to rest, refuel, and refit, with the more

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[643] *Brereton Diaries*, August-September, passim; *Parks Diary*, August-September, passim. These diaries are the best sources of influences on Brereton, with the *Parks Diary* serving as the superior source and one which records Tedder's and Ridgway's influences. Paris had been an early theme with Brereton, who did not comprehend that the logistical effort needed to move and supply the FAAA on the continent would cripple the advancing armies.

[644] Lt. Gen. Gavin told the author in a 1983 interview that Ridgway believed Browning was trying "to get control" of the American airborne forces by establishing 1 Airborne Corps. Ridgway "sold" this idea to Eisenhower when trying to create his own airborne corps command, in which he succeeded. This was XVIII Corps (Airborne). Ridgway, like Bradley, was paranoid over the British influencing or gaining control of US troops. This was a popular theme with Bradley, and it hampered any attempts to coordinate or control combined operations.

[645] Many of the parachute aircraft for COMET were from Williams' command. Hollinghurst, however, was technically the troop carrier commander, though as with all air operations, every air general seemed to have the right to veto every detail.

urgent time press of regrouping for COMET as well as capturing the needed start-lines for the 30 Corps divisions. Meanwhile, advancing infantry divisions still needed "to mop up" bypassed enemy formations, gather prisoners, secure flanks and rear areas, and stage forward supplies for the dash to the Rhine. German airfields were rehabilitated as 2 TAF began to leapfrog its wings forward.[646]

As if to posit Ludendorff's dicta that strategy follows tactics (or here, more accurately, "operations"), Guards Armoured Division became a key influence in determining the fate of the campaign. Major-General Allan Adair's immediate objectives—a bridgehead on the Albert Canal and then on the Meuse-Escaut Canal—and his distant divisional objective—the town and bridges of Eindhoven—were essential to meeting COMET's time schedule. Enemy resistance to his armored advance on two separate axes demonstrated that the pursuit was over, and 11 Armoured Division's failure to gain a canal crossing north of Antwerp before its regrouping indicated that the hardening of the enemy sector was not merely due to local defenses. Bridgeheads on the Albert were not developed until 8 September and on the key De Groot bridge on the Escaut, on the 10th.[647] (See figure 42.)

Elements of four German divisions were identified within the 30 Corps sector on 7 September, including fragments of the 1 SS Panzer Division and a handful of parachute battle groups. (See figure 41.) These units functioned not simply as a block to Allied advance, but were in effect the "straggler line" designed to recover the fragments of escaping formations still percolating through the Allied lines. This

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[646] *Second Army History*, 195-197.

hardened crust, the subsequent slow regrouping of Second Army, and the failure to seize a bridgehead on the Escaut Canal short of the Dutch frontier, called the question on COMET's viability as a lightning strike to seize a Rhine bridgehead. 30 Corps' start line was farther from the river bridge objectives than intended, and two additional water barriers remained in between. Most importantly, it appeared that the shattered enemy had congealed, but the question remained, how thick was the enemy crust and did anything substantial lay beyond it?[648]

Three significant areas evolved during the week between COMET's conception and the seizure of the De Groot bridge. Logistics, an evolving intelligence picture, and a rapidly changing ground situation forced new "appreciations" at every level from theater to the smallest fighting unit.

The 4 September taking of Antwerp, to include its port facilities, seemed to change the logistics picture as well as to cover Bradley's failure to seize the necessary ports to develop CHASTITY and the Quiberon Bay project. Brest, now a matter of prestige rather than a necessity, had been shunted onto an unknown, Simpson, to capture. Moreover, it left open to interpretation a key tenet of Eisenhower's argument for the ANVIL landings in Southern France: that the Marseilles group of ports was essential to the OVERLORD campaign. Having achieved Marshall's goal, to stymie and stop the Italian campaign, Eisenhower hedged on pressing for shipping through

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[647] *Second Army History*, 198-199, Appendix "K"; Captain the Earl of Rosse and Colonel E.R. Hill, *The Story of the Guards Armoured Division* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), 99-122; Maj.-Gen. G.L. Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), 89-98.

[648] Ibid., 199-202. Note that Horrocks' "COMET" plan would have taken these on the move had it been launched on 7 September.

the Mediterranean as Roosevelt and Marshall combined to press for a more rapid prosecution of the allegedly secondary campaign in the Pacific.[649]

From the perspectives of the 21 and 12th Army Groups, Antwerp meant different things. Montgomery's administrative plan, based on the 21 August Administrative Appreciation, was based upon maintenance from the Seine ports, with the delay of opening a more forward base until Rotterdam and Hamburg were captured.[650]

Logistics became a wedge that not only drove apart operations but began to split loyalties concerning command. Having received the second half of Eisenhower's directive on 6 September, Montgomery recorded:

> So everything is to be split-forces, air, maintenance, transport, rolling stock, etc., etc.
>
> I can see no good results obtaining from this decision; I fear it is exactly what the Germans would like; I fear an early end to the German war is not now likely.
>
> The great and outstanding lesson from this war is the importance of concentration of effort; we now chuck that overboard.

Montgomery, clear in his mind as to why this had happened, named Eisenhower as the problem:

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[649] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2105, 2106, 2107; Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, II, 108. Eisenhower during this period wavered concerning the Mediterranean. On 30 August he told Marshall it might be necessary to support DRAGOON through the Bay of Biscay; the next day he said that the Italian campaign "assumed added importance," not due to its operations but as a possible foil to "fanatics" who might wage guerrilla warfare in the interior of Germany after it collapsed. On 13 September he finally asked Wilson, Devers, and the Mediterranean commanders to investigate creating supply capabilities to support Third Army.

[650] "Liberation Campaign," 43-46, Campaign Admin. Development, "21 Army Group Administrative Appreciation: Location of the Advance Base and Maintenance beyond the River Seine." The M.G.A., however, described the British targets as Antwerp and Rotterdam at a meeting at SHAEF on 26 August.

> He issues instructions without first discussing the repercussions with his subordinate generals.[651]

In reality, Monty meant "without discussing it with the 21 Army Group commander," for Montgomery knew that Ike had held a conference with Bradley and his army commanders prior to issuing his directive splitting the forces.

In this light, the surprise capture of Antwerp, particularly as Crerar's two corps having seized only one port were stretched from Le Havre to Boulogne—offered perplexing challenges both logistically and to the accomplishment of Montgomery's long-range intentions regarding a northern envelopment of the Ruhr. From a tactical and operational perspective, Crerar's Canadians were the logistical foundation for Montgomery's campaign until well into the Ruhr. Dempsey recorded his meeting with Montgomery's administrative chief on 7 September, as COMET awaited launching:

> In the existing conditions operations are strictly limited by the administrative situation, and until we can get the Channel ports (preferably BOULOGNE and DUNKIRK) which will land some 5000 tons a day, until DIEPPE is working, which will land 4000 tons a day, and until we get a regular air lift of 1000 tons a day, Second Army cannot be developed beyond ARNHEM. When these ports have been opened we can go as far as MUNSTER.[652]

Antwerp's own role, even in Dempsey's mind, was hazy. Opening its northern approaches was a priority, but was clearly a secondary mission given to his flank

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[651] *Montgomery Log*, 6 September 1944. Montgomery was quick to note that Eisenhower's directive to Montgomery had received a low priority at Eisenhower's headquarters, marked "important" as opposed to "top priority" which all command messages to senior commanders were. Had Monty wished to say that this was deliberate, and that this had never happened to any other senior commander at any other time during the war, he would have been on good grounds concerning the second half of that statement, and might charitably be said to have probable cause concerning the first. Deliberate or accidental, this was a serious error on SHAEF's part and should have resulted in the firing of the signal officer responsible. Worse, the upshot was to convince Montgomery that SHAEF was farther out of touch with the front than he had feared.

[652] *Dempsey Diary*, 7 SEP 44.

corps. An hour after his recorded meeting with his administrative chief, he saw Lt. Gen. N.E. Ritchie of 12 Corps and ordered:

> One division in ANTWERP ready to move NORTH and go for WALCHEREN Peninsula;
>
> One division SOUTH of ANTWERP ready to move towards BREDA to protect the LEFT flank of 30 Corps; and
>
> One division holding the ring from ANTWERP to GHENT.[653]

Having met with Montgomery prior to the other two meetings, and with Montgomery in daily meetings with his administrative chief, this was the picture in Dempsey's mind as reflected by the 21 Army Group's commanders intentions, which still centred on going east to the Ruhr. At the same time, Montgomery noted in his diary that the two forward corps of Second Army would still be able to operate "on by bounds to BERLIN."

More important, Montgomery believed, correctly, that:

> 12 Army Group pays no attention to any orders it may have received about the priority of the northern thrust; its total available maintenance is split equally between two Armies; this actually gives priority to the Third US Army as it has less Divisions employed.

Bradley's actions were seen by the 21 Army Group commander as a reflection of Eisenhower's lack of grip on his own forces, feeding Monty's persistent belief that Ike was "unfit" to lead the land armies. Monty stated:

> Eisenhower has no idea what is going on.[654]

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[653] Ibid.

[654] *Montgomery Log*, 7 September 1944. Montgomery increasingly saw SHAEF's staff as culprits combining to keep Eisenhower isolated from the reality of the battle situation. See further log entries for 7 September and beyond.

Montgomery thus saw the immediate logistical famine as a command issue based upon failing to establish a priority, more for transportation assets that were in short supply, than for port facilities, which were in the process of being captured and cleared. He continued to see the final opening of Antwerp not simply as a channel control and demining operation, but also as a subsequent task for First Canadian Army on the seaward flank. Ritchie could help by limited operations north of Antwerp. INFATUATE, turned down by Brereton as an Airborne Army mission, sent a further signal that strategically, SHAEF saw no immediacy in Antwerp as a target.

Indeed, considering that First Allied Airborne Army was the theater's only reserve, and Antwerp was the primary goal of the theater's immediate ground campaign, a clear directive to complete the opening of Antwerp should have been issued. Tedder—whose contempt for Montgomery not only included walking SHAEF's halls louding enumerating Montgomery's "mistakes," but also attempting to define ground tasks for 21 Army Group through Eisenhower—expressed his strong beliefs to Brereton that the Rotterdam port should be the key airborne target.[655]

While the flak concentrations on the coast might well have precluded such an operation, a close discussion of it with Eisenhower might have clarified the key variant in views among SHAEF, 21 Army Group, and 12th Army Group. That variant was time. The driving force separating these headquarters was the perception of opportunity that the victory disease had inspired, but which each of the respective

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[655] Tedder attempted to convince Eisenhower that as Deputy Supreme Commander, he was deputy for all operations, not simply air. Moreover, considering he felt that airpower and ground power were equals, he saw no problem with designating ground objectives to support his air campaign. These were mostly airfields, but later an odd symbiosis that supports this belief would develop between him and Montgomery over an air plan designated HURRICANE, that would be advanced by Tedder in October 1944.

commanders viewed through the prism not only of his own command but of his own problems. As such, how fleeting an opportunity they perceived varied not simply by intelligence on enemy forces deployed, but weather projections, logistical forecasts, artillery ammunitions states (which grew critical at this period), replacements (which grew to crisis proportions not just between the British and Canadians, but soon to be among the American divisions also), and a host of military considerations of every kind.

The time variant had also modified the logistical plan and the perception of what it had always been. Montgomery should have been advised in detail of the American logistical view, particularly since it was Lt. Gen. J.C.H. Lee, Eisenhower's American services of supply commander, and not SHAEF's G-4, Lt. Gen. Humphrey Gale, who really forced the Antwerp issue. As with everything from Eisenhower to Montgomery, it came in writing rather than in discussion, as Ike was not fond of speaking with his British subordinate.

The "time" viewpoint no doubt was enhanced by Antwerp's capture, but its capture, as was known by all at the time, meant nothing if it couldn't be used. Antwerp's use, however, was Lee's solution to his own dilemma. Three weeks before, the weekly meeting of chief administrative officers at SHAEF had agreed that:

> the development of BREST for intake of US divisions and their equipment was of highest priority as soon BREST is captured.

CHASTITY, however, was seen as tentative, and General Gale asked the planners for

a forecast what the overall tonnage capacity and requirements would be on the 15th September and the need for this scheme[656]

Despite this lack of urgency in deciding or forcing an operational solution, ports remained the concern of logistical planners. Noting the British targets of "Antwerp and Rotterdam," Monty's administrative deputy offered up Le Havre and Rouen to the Americans, though Lee stated he believed study would support the priority for Brest.[657] Moreover, as the advance continued, the road distance from current ports forced rapid rail restoration as a key to diminishing trucks needed for long hauls. Lee transferred both locomotives and rolling stock to help 21 Army Group, but the Americans continued to review "CHASTITY's practicality" weekly despite its obvious benefits in saving long hauls of troops and equipment by road or rail.[658]

The continuing problem was not simple. Commanders could make a logistical investment for the future, focusing on opening ports such as Antwerp, Brest, or Quiberon Bay, or continue to press advances, hoping to reach immediate objectives before administration broke down. When and how logistics would break down was problematical. Stopgap measures such as the Red Ball and Red Lion truck runs, the reduction in port offloading to free trucks for long hauls, and the continuing rehabilitation of the French rail system added to tonnages delivered beyond any original forecasts. This, plus the economies taken in operating measures and the

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[656] NARA, RG 331, SGS, entry 1, Box 55, File 337/8 Volume II, Chief Administrative Officer Conferences, Meeting of Chief Administrative Officers Minutes of Weekly 22nd Meeting, 19 August 1944, 1, 2.

[657] Weekly Meeting of Chief Administrative Officers Minutes of 23rd Meeting, 26 August 1944, 3.

[658] Weekly Meeting of Chief Administrative Officers Minutes of 24th Meeting, 2d September 1944.

intermittent use of air transport, gave a false positive outlook on continuing operations.

Montgomery had simplified the answer by pressing for one advance, at least until the logistical situation had been improved. Bradley had pressed for his own advance, virtually ignoring his own solution by finishing the capture of the southern Brittany ports. By themselves, these would have solved 12th Army Group's problems in mid- to late September had they been fully approached in mid-August. Moreover, Bradley's eastern advance eliminated the "self-healing" logistical problem of a northern advance. Aiming Patton to Metz instead of Aachen meant that the necessary force to take Antwerp, the V-2 sites, and the Channel ports held by the remnants of the Fifteenth Army, plus an advance on the Ruhr, could not be maintained. Bradley's choice forced an "advance or ports" alternative on Montgomery that would not have obtained if there were three full armies operating north of the Ardennes. With such a force, the Allies could have had an advance and seized adequate ports simultaneously.

Eisenhower's 4 September directive had reversed reality. Recognizing that the German Army in the west was not capable of an immediate cohesive defense, he ordered a general advance and the seizure of two substantial areas of Germany without recognizing the logistical improbability of supporting sufficient forces to do so. By doing so, he had transferred the onus to succeed on his subordinates as he withdrew to his waterside headquarters far from the front.

Failing to be forced by logistics to choose, Eisenhower faced the nuances of a changing intelligence picture. Dempsey and Horrocks had already felt the change at the front. SHAEF and the senior headquarters, however, had to respond by changing

their plans. Strong's intelligence section summarizing the week ending on 9 September noted the Allied attempts at encirclement had now reached the stage where the actual "battle for the REICH is beginning." SHAEF assessed the 48 "nominal" divisions located in the west as equating to four panzer divisions and 20 infantry divisions. On Eisenhower's right, a wide gap still existed through which the German Nineteenth Army was escaping, though this equated to no more than three divisions. The German First Army, fronting on Patton's forces, received two "low grade" infantry divisions as reinforcements, and three panzer or panzer grenadier divisions remained in the line, with two more being rebuilt behind the front. SHAEF noted that Fifth Panzer Army had "disappeared" and that the armor both north and south of the Ardennes

> seems to have been withdrawn from the line and much of it has been reported either in layback positions or on its way out altogether, presumably for refit, not to say rebirth. In the NORTH, panzer elements have been going out via LIEGE, and splitting into two parties, going WEST and NORTH; in the SOUTH, two panzer groups are crystallizing [sic] in rear of METZ and NANCY. On the whole, the group SOUTH of the ARDENNES seems the more active and possibly the larger.[659]

On Eisenhower's left, or northern, flank opposing Montgomery, Strong noted:

> Fifteenth Army is now isolated and its ten divisions cut off on the FLANDERS Coast, though some may escape by ferry or by the sea. The approaches to HOLLAND ahead of the British advance are meantime only blocked by the natural water obstacles and by the meagre resources of C-in-C NETHERLANDS, amounting to one division and some oddments.[660]

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[659] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 25 for the Week Ending 9 September 1944, 1, 5,

[660] Ibid., 5.

Importantly, no panzer divisions or equivalents were noted in the 21 Army Group area.

SHAEF's analysts, furthermore, predicted that even with transfering divisions from other fronts, no more than a dozen divisions could be scraped up in the next two months.

They estimated that 200,000 men had escaped the furnace of the Normandy campaign, predicted that "many" of the 70,000 troops in Belgium would make good their escape, and that with perhaps 30,000 replacements from within Germany, the strength available to man the West Wall would be about 300,000 men, or roughly 15 divisions. They noted further that:

> It is most unlikely that more than the true equivalent of four panzer/panzer grenadier divisions, with 600 tanks, will ever be found.

By September's end, with intratheater transfers, perhaps 20 division equivalents would exist in the west.[661]

With the capture of Romania and its oil fields, and the continuing attacks against synthetic oil production by the USSTAF, Germany faced a dim future, but its military capability to defend was not eliminated. Moreover, as the SHAEF analysis continued, it provided, without comment, a detailed study of the German Siegfried Line. The Allies having reached the West Wall, this study should have influenced operations, as the original CIS Staff Study concerning terrain had failed to do.

In terms used by a German military writer, the study described the line's defenses as "tactics dug into the ground." Meant to be a continuous

antitank/antipersonnel obstacle covering the prewar German border, the defense zone extended in depth to furnish "a dense zone of cross-fire to seal off any penetration of the forward position." The German line reversed the Maginot design, which comprised massive forts in shallow depth. The Siegfried Line consisted of numerous small positions in extensive depth. Admitting that the line was designed as a skeleton of a defense upon which additional field works, artillery in depth, and reserves would be used, the basic defense concept still required the counterattack style of German defense used since the Great War to maintain its integrity. While the current state of the line was speculated upon, the unalterable characteristic of the line was unchangeable:

> In general, the fortifications are strongest between STRASBOURG and TRIER. Specially stong areas are OFFENBERG (opposite STRASBOURG), KARLSRUHE, the BIENWALD gap, PIRMASENS, ZWEIBRUCKEN, SAARBRUCKEN, TRIER and AACHEN. At all of these there are, in addition to the main line, reserve positions which are also fortified in depth. Moreover, between KARLSRUHE and TRIER, there is a stop line, lightly fortified and NOT of great depth, running 15 to 40 miles behind the frontier.[662]

Without stating the obvious, Strong's latest estimate had begun to put an end to SHAEF's "victory disease." His previous estimate had termed the

> German Army in the West [as] no longer a cohesive force but a number of fugitive battle groups.

Eisenhower had responded by opening his 4 September directive with the words,

> Enemy resistance on the entire front shows signs of collapse.[663]

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[661] Ibid.

[662] SHAEF Summary No. 25, "The Siegfried Line," 1, 2-4.

[663] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 24, 4; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2115.

The specter of an enemy manning a fortified line with 15–20 divisions and rebuilding a panzer force to a strength of 600 tanks was not indicative of a crumbled force. Moreover, the location of the enemy's strength and the potential strength in depth and number of positions of the Siegfried defenses had to be taken into account. The greatest depth of the Siegfried Line lay between 12th Army Group's boundaries, with the southern flank most heavily defended. Additionally, the current panzer divisions operating were known to be forming in front of Third Army's axis of advance.

Bradley's views of this increased resistance are unrecorded, though his aide claimed that Bradley questioned SHAEF's estimate and the

> picture [Bradley] got on our ability to maintain armies of our own for a push through the Siegfried Line on our routes of advance.[664]

He also told Patton that

> we must take Brest in order to maintain the illusion of the fact that the US Army cannot be beaten.[665]

Bradley and Patton blamed their supply problems on COMZ and Lee, who made no friends by moving his headquarters into Paris at the height of the gasoline shortage. Despite numerous conferences at SHAEF and with COMZ, both Bradley and Patton remained strangely silent on the uncaptured ports and uncleared areas that were meant to be supply bases for 12th Army Group.

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[664] *Hansen Diary*, Sept. 10th. The relevant G-2 estimates and files for this period are missing from the official 12th Army Group records. The enemy picture in divisions can be replicated by referring to the 12th Army Group daily situation maps, copies of which are kept in NARA, RG 319, and also at CMH.

[665] *Patton Diary*, September 9, 1944. Note that the Ninth Army, which had assumed the clearance of Brest and the Brittany Peninsula as its mission, was assigned three infantry divisions and one armored division, all formerly Third Army Divisions. VIII Corps was likewise transferred from the Third to the Ninth Army.

Third Army's G-2 noted the resistance met along the Moselle River from the crossings on 5 September, and three days later cited that among the German capabilities assessed were: the ability to both defend and delay east of the Moselle while bringing forward reserves; local armored counterattacks against spearheads; and the potential to defend and delay the Third Army in its zone of advance while counterattacking from the south—and that a delay, trading space for time to cover the manning of the Siegfried Line, was possible. No longer did Third Army report "no cohesive front lines" for its enemy. [666]

On 8 September, Bradley pressed Hodges to advance his armor more quickly in the V Corps sector, claiming that German panzer attacks against Patton were due to V Corps' lack of progress. First Army's advances, however, registered between five and 10 miles daily along the entire front despite gasoline shortages.[667] Bradley's preoccupation with Hodges' right flank was a portent of future operations.

First Army, however, prepared for entering Germany on a broad front. Originally meeting scattered resistance along its front as it turned eastward, the First, like the Third Army, met new resistance after it moved through Liege on 8 September. V Corps cleared the entire Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, while VII Corps moved on Aachen from the southern approach. XIX Corps moved toward the Maastricht appendix, with its left flank refused at Hasselt. Hodges intended that Collins, his

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[666] *Third Army After Action Report, II*, G-2, LXIV, Daily Intelligence Summary, 8 September 1944. No German divisional identifications are noted in the reports for the beginning of September. SHAEF's Summary No. 25 indicated that the major enemy formations fronting on Third Army were 3 Para, 26 SS. 27 SS. Panzer Lehr, 48 Inf, 15 Panzer Grenadier, and an additional infantry division moving into sector. Third Army's published operations map for 15 September indicates elements of three Panzer Grenadier divisions, four infantry divisions, and two parachute divisions. Third Army then had six infantry divisions and three armored divisions.

[667] *Hansen Diary*, 8 September 1944.

favorite commander, be the Army main effort. With Gerow's V Corps being prodded by Bradley, a cohesive attack by Second Army and First Army's left-hand corps was impossible, thus ignoring the ideal attack terrain north of Aachen.[668] By 10 September, considering the crisis in his supply, Hodges halted the V Corps advance due to ammunition shortages and cautioned his corps to halt if they met resistance.[669]

Dempsey's Second Army held up COMET. Montgomery had opted for grounding one-third of Dempsey's Army's strength, taking their transport to keep his columns going. These had now stopped. As the airborne operation was delayed, the ground attack evolved from its original continuous sweep from "Louvain and Antwerp" to Horrocks' current COMET plan that called for an immediate seizure of the Corps start line, Eindhoven-Tilburg-Breda. Firm resistance and continued shifting of troops had prevented this effort. The distance from the De Groot bridge on the Escaut Canal to Eindhoven had not been spanned. Dempsey had continued to put off launching COMET, and on 8 September, he indicated to Horrocks that COMET could be launched no earlier than the night of 9/10 September. Dempsey put the delay to continuing bad weather, but the next day Montgomery made clear a more serious issue:

> The stiff resistance on the line of the Albert Canal has prevented quick progress by Second Army. The airborne drop is therefore put back; we cannot drop the airborne troops on the RHINE and MEUSE bridges until the leading Corps of Second Army has got to EINDHOVEN. It

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[668] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45*, I, 38-44, Situation Map No. 5 LIEGE-AACHEN-DUREN; SHAEF War Room Report, 10 September 1944. During this period, when Hodges and Patton received equal tonnages, First Army used approximately 571,000 gallons of fuel daily. Hodges had five infantry and three armored divisions.

[669] Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 147.

looks as if the whole airborne drop will now have to be on a far bigger scale.[670]

Montgomery issued new orders to Crerar and Dempsey, but did not cancel or amend COMET. These orders were:

Canadian Army

(a) To take over GHENT from Second Army.

(b) To capture Havre

(c) In the Pas de Calais to capture BOULOGNE, DUNKIRK, and CALAIS in that order.

(d) Then to clear the area of the mainland enclosed in the line BRUGES-GHENT-NICHOLAS.

(e) Then to capture the islands at the mouth of the SCHELDT, i.e., WALCHEREN and others, so as to open up the port of ANTWERP.

Second Army

(f) To operate northwards across the MEUSE and the RHINE, through EINDHOVEN and ARNHEM, and secure the area ZWOLLE-ARNHEM-UTRECHT. Later it will move eastwards to the MUNSTER-HAMM area.[671]

Thus, Montgomery assigned Crerar's priorities: to clear his flanks and rear and capture the Channel ports, then to clear the area north of the Rhine to open Antwerp. This permitted Dempsey's advance across the Rhine. But at the same time, Montgomery received a signal from the VCIGS regarding current intelligence on the V-2 rockets attacking England. Given the new enemy threat, and his own military

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[670] *Dempsey Diary*, 8 SEP 44; *Montgomery Log*, 9 September 1944; *Alanbrooke Papers*, M/184, 9 Sep. Montgomery also signaled Alanbrooke emphasizing that the airborne drop could not start prior to Second Army reaching Eindhoven.

[671] *Montgomery Log*, 9 September 1944. Montgomery had impressed on Crerar his role in maintaining the advance. NAC, RG 24, Volume 11001, War Diary G.O.C.-in-C First Canadian Army, 1 Sep 44-30 Sep 44, "Memo to Comd Corps, 9 September 1944," notes: "It follows that a speedy and victorious conclusion to the war now depends, fundamentally, upon the capture by First Cdn Army of Channel ports which have now become so essential, if administrative problem is to be solved i.e. LE HAVRE, BOULOGNE, DUNKIRK, CALAIS, and generally in that order of importance."

objectives, it was expected that Montgomery would relate these problems and their solution to a command decision requiring concentration of effort:

> I am more and more convinced every day that unless Eisenhower will concentrate on one thrust, and put everything into it, then we shall make no progress and the war will be prolonged.[672]

While the apparent stalemate on the Eindhoven road may have prompted the review of attack plans, the accrual of intelligence did not bode well for the current COMET plan. Dempsey's intelligence on 8 September stated that the presence of parachute and other troop reinforcements definitely indicated that the number of enemy troops between the Albert Canal and the Rhine was growing. The following day's analysis noted that the areas southwest of Antwerp still remained to be cleared, that numerous troops behind stiff rearguards were waiting to cross the Scheldt, and that the rearguards on the critical Albert Canal were receiving fresh reinforcement. While German armor was expected, no divisional armor had been identified.[673]

Dempsey's own assessment concerning COMET grew dark:

> It is clear that the enemy is bringing up all the reinforcements he can lay hands on for the defence of the ALBERT Canal, and that he appreciates the importance of the area ARNHEM-NIJMEGEN. It looks as though he is going to do all he can do to hold it. This being the case, any question of a rapid advance to the North-East seems unlikely. Owing to our maintenance situation, we will not be in a position to fight a real battle for perhaps ten days or a fortnight. Are we right to direct Second Army to ARNHEM, or would it be better to hold a LEFT flank along the ALBERT Canal, and strike due EAST towards COLOGNE in conjunction with First Army?[674]

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[672] Ibid.

[673] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 96, Up to 2400 hrs. 8 September 44, 1; Summary No. 97, Up to 2400 hrs. 9 September 44, 1.

[674] *Dempsey Diary*, 9 SEP 44.

Dempsey had yet to clear the enemy from south of the Escaut, but the question he posed required not simply a recasting of Montgomery's operational design, but a major decision concerning the execution of Eisenhower's Broad Front strategy. On balance, what Dempsey proposed could be a simple reordering of priorities, but one that would favor the escape of the Fifteenth Army and the establishment of a heavy German presence in Holland north of the Rhine. To move on the Ruhr would have guaranteed a longer campaign to free Antwerp as well as installing a long, open front, albeit across the Rhine along Second Army's entire rear. Neither Crerar nor Dempsey, even with the move of 8 Corps from Normandy, would have the divisions to counter such a threat.

Montgomery certainly felt the pull both rearward to clear the coast and Antwerp and, after Nye's message on the V-2 threat, toward Rotterdam. Given the size of his forces, shifting priority to these objectives would stop any eastward advance by Second Army and commit 21 Army Group to a prolonged offensive in north Holland, the results of which would favor the airmen for airfields but would probably eliminate 21 Army Group from any advance on the Ruhr. Additionally, it would require the commitment of the American divisions not yet deployed to fill the vacuum north of the Maastricht-Aachen approach unless Third Army shifted northwards and Patch's Seventh Army, reinforced by new divisions, took over the Saar approach. Sixth Army Group would then be given an expanded role and, theoretically, its supplies could come from the Marseilles port group. This was a major reordering of the front, in line with the emerging appreciations of enemy

resistance but not catering to the idea of a 1944 defeat of the Germans that was then rampant in Washington and London.[675]

Eisenhower, who had yet to assume command of the DRAGOON forces, had planned for no such eventualities. If Eisenhower played to form and entrusted only "his boys" with great responsibilities as in the past, and considering his estranged feelings towards Devers, he would never give Devers a significant role.[676]

From Montgomery's perspective, COMET became more necessary, not simply to bounce the Rhine, but to seal North Holland and permit Crerar to systematically move northward. This would not only clear the ports, but also deal with the Antwerp and now the V-2 threat while Second Army maintained its advance to threaten the Ruhr. In order to do so, he needed Eisenhower's commitment to sustain his advance, and that of Hodges alongside.

On 6 September, Montgomery had signaled Eisenhower emphasizing that Eisenhower could

> rely on 21 Army Group to go all out 100 percent to further your intention to destroy enemy forces.[677]

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[675] CMH, MS, 2-3.7 AE.P-9, Royce Thompson, *Proposed CCS Directive to Eisenhower to End ETO War in 1944*. As late as October, Marshall debated sending Eisenhower a directive to end the war by the end of 1944. This was believed to have been initiated by Eisenhower's 13 September summary sent to the CCS, and was discussed informally by the CCS in September and pursued throughout the month of October. See also Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, V*, 377-404, passim.

[676] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2466-2469. This, of course, dealt primarily with Americans, over whose career fates he held total control. His continuing irritation with Montgomery stemmed not only from the fact he (Eisenhower) was appointed by the British government, but from the fact he had not "chosen" Monty, who therefore was not beholden to Ike for his job. Ike, like his benefactor Marshall, trusted only those he knew and considered in his camp. So, also, did Montgomery. Ike's feelings toward Devers are reflected in his continued attempts to belittle his contribution to Marshall.

[677] EL, Correspondence File, M-169, 6 Sept. 1944.

Despite his distaste for the command arrangements, Montgomery had demonstrated no indication that he would attempt to have them changed. He did, however, recognize that the decision point for maintaining an adequate double thrust concerning priorities had passed. Bradley, having equalized supply to both the First and Third Armies, was holding his own on neither avenue of approach. Intelligence had indicated that Patton would soon be opposed by the remnants of Germany's panzers, and that the refurbishment of enemy forces was outstripping the Allied ability to maintain an advance. COMET's limited force and the new situation to the northwest at Antwerp would require a new plan. Montgomery wanted Eisenhower's support in initiating one.

The split directive, missent by SHAEF, prompted this. Monty signaled, noting the receipt of the missing parts:

> Have studied your directive No. FWD-13889 carefully and cannot see it stated that the northern route of advance to the RUHR is to have priority over the eastern advance to the SAAR. Actually, XIX US Corps is unable to advance properly for lack of petrol. Could you send a responsible Staff Officer to see me so that I can explain things to him.[678]

Eisenhower chose to come himself. He had last seen Montgomery on 26 August and then only for a few minutes. Considering that he had committed the theater reserve for Montgomery's use, that the longest flank for any Army Group was still the uncleared Channel Coast, and that the key to his logistical problems was seeming more and more pointed to Antwerp, his only course of action as "ground forces commander" was to go forward to see for himself, hear his commander's plans,

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[678] EL, Correspondence File, M-181, 9 September 1944.

and outline his campaign plan. Monty had asked for this meeting on 4 September, and though Eisenhower had met with Bradley at least three times and even with his American army commanders during this period, Eisenhower ignored the northern flank. He would not go forward to speak with Dempsey or Crerar on their situations until later in the campaign, and his meetings with Montgomery would be forced by the situation, not by his own desire to actively command ground operations.

The 10th of September, 1944, was a day of decision that changed the Northwest European Campaign. That morning, while conferring with Browning and Dempsey, Montgomery ordered an increase in COMET's force, deciding to employ the entire airborne force of First Allied Airborne Army; he noted that "enemy resistance there is getting stronger."[679] If an assault to the east and the use of the airborne at Wesel vice Arnhem were discussed, this was not recorded.[680]Dempsey, who had already questioned the enemy's strength north of the Neder Rijn in his own diary, noted:

> In view of increasing German strength on Second Army front in the ARNHEM-NIJMEGEN area the employment of one airborne division in this area will not be sufficient. I got from C-in-C his agreement to the use of three airborne divisions.

Dempsey returned to his headquarters with Browning and, according to his notes,

> fixed with him the outline of the operation. He can be ready to carry this out on 16 September at the earliest.

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[679] *Montgomery Log*, 10 September.

[680] Richard Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe,1943-1945: Success or Failure?* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 214; Richardson, *Flashback*, 186. Lamb says that Dempsey had called to recommend an airborne drop at Wesel vice Arnhem, but that the V.2 message from the War Office that morning (it was actually the day before) decided the issue. No record of any such discussion was made by either man, nor did Dempsey record his disapproval of the new plan. Wesel had been ruled out early in COMET's planning due to heavy flak, a fact that Dempsey was aware of; he would not have reinstituted an airborne plan even if the Wesel advance was agreed to.

Later that afternoon, Horrocks received new instructions. Dempsey records:

> [I] gave him the plan for the operation to be carried out by Airborne Corps and 30 Corps-with the co-operation of 8 Corps on the RIGHT and 12 Corps on the LEFT.

The complementary ground attack, planned as a three-corps offensive, was named GARDEN. O'Connor's 8 Corps was to be brought forward and Ritchie's efforts shifted eastward, requiring an investment both in time and supplies but permitting a heavy assault to steamroll the enemy's strengthened defense. Following his meeting with Horrocks, Dempsey met with Broadhurst.[681]

While there is no doubt that Montgomery and Dempsey were in accord concerning the details of the new operation, Dempsey took over its planning and coordination. As with EPSOM, CHARNWOOD, GOODWOOD, BLUECOAT, and other operations, Dempsey commanded the tactical forces, with oversight, not interference, from Montgomery.[682]

Eisenhower arrived at Brussels airfield and, due to his injured knee, the conference with Montgomery was held within the aircraft. Montgomery recorded the meeting for Alanbrooke via Nye:

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[681] *Dempsey Diary*, 10 SEP 44. Dempsey records the range status of Broadhurst's squadrons. Considering that Broadhurst would state that he was not informed of the operation, it is inconceiveable that the man who was coordinating air support for COMET would not be kept abreast of the change; PRO, W0 205 /192, 21 A Gp/00/432/Ops/A, 11 September 1944, Outline Plan for Revised Operation "COMET." Note that this memo at 21 AG by Belchem states that operation is "to lay a stair carpet."

[682] Hart, *Montgomery and "Collossal Cracks,"* passim. Many have accused Montgomery of overcontrol, and assumed that Dempsey was a cipher. The archival record for this operation does not support that view. For the only serious discussion of Dempsey, Crerar, and Montgomery's relations with them, see Hart. The Persian Gulf war demonstrated that even with modern communications, it is difficult for the senior headquarters to control operations on the battlefield and that the headquarters fighting the battle should be the lowest level headquarters where communications and a complete array of assets, to include air, logistics, special intelligence, and reserves, can be employed. In World War II, this was an Army-level headquarters.

I said it was essential he should know my views and the action to be taken was then for him to decide. I gave him my opinion on the need to concentrate on one selected thrust vide my M160 of 4 Sep. He did NOT repeat NOT agree. I said that in para 4 of Part 4 of his 13889 of 5 Sep he stated he had always given and still did give priority to the RUHR and the northern route of advance. He then said that he did not mean priority as absolute priority and could not scale down the SAAR thrust in any way. He said he had not meant what was in the telegram as regards priority for the RUHR thrust.

> But we have got no further. I foresee considerable delay before I can build up enough strength to develop operations northwards towards ARNHEM and UTRECHT as I have not the transport to get forward any maintenance and bridging. A great deal of bridging will be required.[683]

Tedder, who attended the meeting, sent the following description of the meeting to Portal:

> Today (10 September) I accompanied Eisenhower in Brussels to meet Montgomery. In our discussion there the advance to Berlin was not discussed as a serious issue, nor do I think it was so intended. The real issue is the degree of priority given to the American corps operating on Montgomery's right flank and the extent to which Montgomery control[s] his operations. *A useful discussion then followed.* Montgomery, however, made great play over the word "priority" and insisted that his interpretation of the word implies absolute priority if necessary to the exclusion of all other operations. Argument on such a basis obviously futile and Eisenhower made it clear that he could not accept such an interpretation. It is impossible to fight both hands at present, and date for the left hook has not come yet and could not come until north army group maintenance was based secretly [securely?] on Channel ports.
>
> I feel the discussion cleared the air, though Montgomery will of course be dissatisfied in not getting blank cheque. It will help to insure Ruhr thrust does get proper priority which we all feel it should have.[684]

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[683] M.186 quoted in Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Field Marsha 1944-1976* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), 53.

[684] NARA, RG 319, AMSSO to OCTAGON CAS FROM D/SAC, 111531 September 1944, Extracts from D/SAC Diary, Pogue Secret Files, 27 March 1947. Italicized words added in diary not in message. See also shortened variant in Tedder, *With Prejudice*, 571; LHC, *Papers of Sir Humphrey Gale* [hereafter referred to as *Gale Diary*], 10 September 1944. Gale, who according to most accounts was excluded from the meeting, says he was called into the conference after it had gone on for a while

Sir Humphrey Gale noted Montgomery's refusal to clear Antwerp immediately, but did not equate it with the need to maintain momentum at least to the Rhine. Gale never recorded the subtleties in the operational plans, nor did he see Montgomery as doing anything but "going to play for his own hand," inspired only because of his replacement as ground commander. He did, however, agree, that the support of Hodges' northern corps needed to be addressed.[685]

Eisenhower records that he had stressed the need to close to the Rhine on all fronts, and that Antwerp's opening was Montgomery's priority, though he noted that taking Arnhem would

> merely be an incident and extension of our eastward rush to the line we needed for temporary security [the Rhine].[686]

Montgomery did not need permission to launch an expanded COMET. First Allied Airborne Army remained per the 4 September directive under his planning authority, though no doubt existed that SHAEF could withdraw that authority. It is, however, doubtful that Eisenhower gripped the relevance of what was at stake, as he

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and was attacked with "recriminations by Montgomery and Graham" *concerning details of transport.* He accused Montgomery in his diary of discussion, stating, "My own view is that MONTGOMERY never intended to go to BERLIN . . . and that he wanted proof that Eisenhower had prevented him from ending the war in a few days."

[685] *Gale Diary*, 10 September 1944. Montgomery, of course, was not refusing to clear Antwerp; he had assigned the mission to First Canadian Army, in whose sector the port had been assigned. Gale's comments were typical of the SHAEF staff. He knew little of what was transpiring on the battlefield and was upset when it disrupted his methodical supply plans based on the phase line forecasts. His argument should have been with his own boss, Eisenhower, who controlled all ground forces.

[686] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 307; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2135, fn 5; Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 76 fn; Major-General R.E. Urquhart with Wilfred Greatorex, *Arnhem* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1958), 4; Hamilton, *Monty: The Field Marshal*, 64. In old age Eisenhower told his biographer that he not only agreed to MARKET GARDEN, he insisted on it. He also granted a vitriolic interview to journalist Cornelius Ryan, whose description of the 10 September meeting is often quoted. Ryan had several key facts wrong concerning that day, to include the presence of Browning "in the wings" and repeating the fabricated and famous "bridge too far" comment.

remained uncomprehending that the enemy defense had congealed everywhere and that his pursuit was over.

Montgomery believed that the closure to the Rhine on all fronts was not only logistically impossible but increasingly doubtful, as the "destroyed" armies that Eisenhower had described in his early September directive were obviously rapidly regaining strength. The argument really was over concentration, at least temporarily, on a line of operations.

Eisenhower had recorded a confidential memorandum on 5 September stating the following:

> Two weeks ago when General Montgomery insisted upon a whole American Army moving to the northeast on his right flank I told him that he did not need that much strength to destroy the Germans still on his front. With his usual caution he felt it imperative that we make certain of no halt in operations toward Antwerp and Brussels. . . .
>
> I now deem it important, while supporting the advance on eastward through Belgium, to get Patton moving once again so that we may be fully prepared to carry out the original conception for the final stages of this campaign.[687]

Neither man had withdrawn from his August conceptions, but Eisenhower had, in fact, been proven wrong, as even a casual look at the enemy order of battle maps published by his own headquarters would indicate.[688] The bulk of the enemy force remaining in the West was in the northern sector. Montgomery did need forces to gain both Brussels and Antwerp, and in fact needed more forces to maintain an eastward

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[687] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, "Secret Office Memorandum," September 5, 1944, 2121-2122.

[688] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summaries, Nos. 22, 23, 24, 19 August to 2 September, 1944; Enemy order of battle maps.

movement or to clear Antwerp. He could not do both. Moreover, the concentration of logistics to gain a line on the Rhine was not there.

> Eisenhower knew this and so warned Marshall on 4 September, saying:
>
> The closer we get to the Siegfried Line the more we will be stretched administratively and eventually a period of relative inaction will be imposed upon us. The potential danger is that while we are temporarily stalled the enemy will be able to pick up bits and pieces of forces everywhere and reorganize them swiftly for defending the Siegfried Line or the Rhine.[689]

If Eisenhower held to this line during the 10 September meeting, he was in fact contradicting his own belief that his forces were about to take both the Ruhr and the Saar. At Antwerp, he noted the "line needed for temporary security" was the Neder Rijn, hence Arnhem was mandatory as an operation. But what of Bradley's operations, and their relation to those in the north?[690]

As Montgomery prepared his improved COMET, Bradley issued a new directive, Letter of Instruction Number Eight. Bradley's orders followed Eisenhower's policy:

> Twelfth Army Group advances to the East to secure bridgeheads over the RHINE from MANNHEIM to KOLN both inclusive.
>
> His directives to his armies were:
>
> First Army.
>
> (1) Continue to advance to the East to secure crossings over the RHINE River in the vicinity of KOBLENZ, BONN and KOLN.
>
> (2) Make contact with 21 Army Group and protect the left (north) flank.

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[689] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2118-2119.

[690] Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 307.

Third Army.

(1) Continue the advance to the East in zone and secure crossings of the RHINE River in the vicinity of MANNHEIM and MAINZ. If sufficient forces become available to Third Army, it will also seize a bridgehead in the vicinity of KARLSRUHE.

(2) Protect the south flank East of ORLEANS inclusive.

Ninth Army.

(1) Reduce the BRITTANY Peninsula and protect the south flank along the LOIRE River from its mouth to ORLEANS inclusive.

Bradley offered no concept of operations that would have required establishing a priority. Instead, the tasks applied bore equal weight except for the note on administration:

> Armies will have equal priorities of supply except that the capture of the BREST area will have first priority.[691]

More importantly, he relegated XIX Corps to a passive role, acting neither in support of nor in concert with Second Army. This shift in priority assured that no concentrated thrust by the British and Americans could be made.

While these orders were issued, Dempsey and Browning began planning to launch a strengthened attack. Browning's arrival at First Allied Airborne Headquarters prompted a hasty assembly of the key generals within the command. The staff rapidly produced an outline directive for PLAN SIXTEEN. Within several hours, a new name emerged: MARKET.

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[691] *12th Army Group Report of Operations*, V, G-3 Section, "Letter of Instruction Number Eight, 10 September 1944."

CHAPTER NINE

MARKET GARDEN

The First Allied Airborne staff dubbed the replacement for COMET "Plan Sixteen" until an official code word could be assigned.[692] Despite American sensitivities over the use of the American divisions, there was never any question of Montgomery's authority concerning committing FAAA to a larger operation. The Chief of Staff, Parks, visiting SHAEF forward on 9 September, had been told that XVIII Corps (Airborne) was available for an operation against Walcheren Island and the Scheldt, and that all of FAAA was available to Montgomery "until the Rhine is crossed." As with most SHAEF decisions, there was a contrary clause, seemingly designed by the SHAEF G-3, to put themselves back in the decision loop. The commitment of the entire Airborne Army was to be referred to SHAEF not for operational reasons, but because SHAEF had committed half of their transports to transport duties. Given the directive committing them to Montgomery, this was assumed to be a mechanical requirement. Brereton's G-3, however, had informed 21 Army Group that US forces were not available for a Walcheren operation, and cited Williams' disapproval of the plan. The G-3 assumed that XVIII Corps would support the Americans, and though Parks knew better, no record exists of FAAA disabusing 21 Army Group of this belief prior to the decision to abandon COMET.[693]

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[692] *Brereton Diaries*, 339, 340; FAAA had only nine operations on the books at the time. British 1st Airborne Division, however, had planned fifteen. The original draft order is marked "Operation Sixteen." "SIXTEEN" was proposed by 1 Airborne Corps.

[693] *Parks Diary*, 9 September 1944, 3, 6; *Brereton Diaries*, 340, 341; "FAAA History," 68; Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 214. Much of FAAA's effort at headquarters level at this time was taken up in fighting transport requirements. CATOR, the subset created to manage airlift and run by FAAA, had been relegated to a "plane provider" by SHAEF's G-4 "Priority Board," who decided on transport missions. Brereton attempted to have Tedder fix this, but MARKET intervened. "FAAA History"

Sunday, 10 September, proved fateful. At 1430 Browning telephoned FAAA with the warning order, recorded by Parks:

> [Eisenhower and Montgomery] desired the LINNET force employed in the COMET area except that it should extend further south . . .
>
> [Browning] had told them that the 15th or 16th was the earliest date possible that this could be done . . .
>
> Eisenhower promised to make all air transport available for the operation.[694]

Brereton called the plans conference for 1800 at his headquarters at Sunninghill Park, Ascot. Present were: Brereton, Browning, Williams, Hollinghurst, Parks, Stearley, Cutler, J.M. Gavin (CG, 82d Airborne), A.C. McAuliffe (Divarty CG, 101st Airborne), and a host of staff officers from 1 Airborne Corps and XVIII Corps. The GOC 1 British Airborne Division, R.E. Urquhart, was not present, nor was 1 Airborne Division represented.[695]

Browning read aloud the outline plan, and this was followed by statements by the various commanders or principal staff officers. The outline listed as Browning's intention:

> Airborne Corps will capture and hold crossings over the canals and rivers on Second Army's main axis of advance.

The key paragraphs of the plan are reproduced below:

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records that the Walcheren Operation was to be part of INFATUATE, with the intention of seizing the eastern causeway of Zuid Beveland using a parachute brigade. It was to be launched in conjunction with a seaborne crossing of the West Schelde and a landward thrust along the isthmus of the Beveland Canal. It never matured beyond planning stages and, due to the tactical situation of the First Canadian Army, was planned to occur in late October. Brereton says that he had disapproved the use of airborne forces in INFATUATE on 11 September, though this did not appear to have been formally conveyed to 21 Army Group. Otway notes that disapproval was sent to 21 AG on 21 September.

[694] *Parks Diary*, 10 September 1944.

[695] Ibid., Minutes of Meeting called by Commanding General, First Allied Airborne Army, held at 1800 hours, 10 September 1944, 1.

METHOD

4. *1 British Airborne Division*

Will land and capture the ARNHEM bridges with sufficient bridgehead to pass formations of Second Army through.

101 US Airborne Division

Will seize and hold the bridges at NIJMEGEN and GRAVE with the same object in view. The capture and retention of the high ground between NIJMEGEN and GROESBEEK is imperative in order to accomplish the Division's task.

82 US Airborne Division

Will seize the following on the Second Army's main axis to ensure the speedy pass through of that Army to the GRAVE, NIJMEGEN and ARNHEM crossings.

a. Canal crossing 3596 [DE GROOT, Junction de la Meuse a L'Escaut, timber decking on steel trestles*]

b. WALKENSWARD

c. EINDHOVEN

d. Bridge in square 4425 [Wilhelmina Canal, ZON, a 2-span steel girder swing bridge*]

e. ST OEDENRODE

f. VEGHEL

g UDEN

52 (L) Division

Will be flown in NORTH of ARNHEM as soon as airfields are available.

LIFTS

5. In principle as for LINNET.[696]

The key statements or decisions made during the conference included:

- that the operation would not take place before the 15th or 16th (Browning);

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[696] NARA. RG 331. SHAEF, Entry 256, "Operation Market", Book 3, First Allied Airborne Headquarters. Airborne Army Operation Reports. 1944, Operation (Sixteen) "MARKET," Outline Plan. 10 Sep 44. Specific information on bridge coordinates/targets [*] found in Bridge Details, appended to Engineer & Topo. O.I.2. G-2 (Int) Div. SHAEF, Market Book 3 file.

- that FAAA would conform to 21 Army Group's "intentions and desires" and that timing would be the greatest factor to establish (Brereton);

- that the range to the target area would not permit a double glider tow, and that single tows for gliders would be used (Williams);

- that the 101st would take the southern air route and the 82d the one north of it, requiring a reversal of missions as originally assigned in the outline plan. The 82d would be briefed by 1 Airborne on their plans [COMET] (Williams; approved by Brereton);

- that the operation would be named MARKET;

- that a drop commencing at daylight would preclude adequate counterflak preparation and that an evening drop would give a full day for preparation; this negated a two-lift operation in one day (Stearley);

- that the 101st's missions would be decided and briefed the next day (Browning);

- that the date for MARKET would be decided on the evening of 11 September.[697]

Flak soon came to the fore as the most significant problem in the target area and was discussed during the morning of the 11 September at the routes-and-timings briefing with Gen. Williams. The divisions soon found that their missions were at

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[697] *Parks Diary*, Conference Notes, 10 September, 1-4.

odds with the air transport commander's views.[698] Flak, not the necessity of a surprise air landing to seize bridges, would determine what the air transport commander would permit.

In the 1st Airborne Division area, the same drop zones designated for COMET were approved, minus the LZ designated for the coup-de-main glider operation to which Leigh Mallory had previously objected. Additional drop zones and landing zones were added to accommodate the three-day delivery of the division in the vicinity of the original COMET areas, with the exception of the Polish "K" drop zone. Assuming that the division would be formed in the objective area and that its presence would eliminate flak, this drop zone was added south of the town of Arnhem.

In the 82d Airborne Division area, Gavin planned with Colonel John Oberdorfer, the A-3 of IX Troop Carrier Command, a series of drop zones that straddled the high ground specified as vital in the outline plan. The LZ designated for the coup de main in COMET north of the NIJMEGEN Bridge was ignored.

In the 101st Airborne Division area, the commander, Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor, protested his assigned missions, and turned down drop zones indicated by Browning that he believed would scatter his division, even though they were designed to establish the crucial first "stair carpet" designed to achieve a quick linkup and passage for the 30 Corps force. Brereton supported Taylor in this argument. Taylor also was supported by a virtual soviet of US Army generals, including Ridgway and

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[698] The appointment of Williams as air transport commander is not recorded and apparently happened prior to the 10 September conference. It can be speculated that he was appointed due to the use of two American divisions to be transported and because he commanded the far larger troop carrier force. Browning was retained as mission commander due to his planning of COMET and because his corps would fit within the British 2 Army structure more easily than Ridgway's XVIII.

Cutler, all decrying the plan and stating that it negated US doctrine by not employing the 101st Airborne as a division.[699]

The disagreement in fact, smacked of more than just a division commander's nonacceptance of the plan. Rather, it harked back to American disatisfaction during the LINNET planning. Brereton informed Parks, probably accepting Taylor's views that:

> The proposal regarding dropping 101 Division along an axis of 30 miles in length is considered to lessen the chances of accomplishment of the present mission. Such dispersion destroys tactical integrity and renders it incapable of fighting as a Division and presents insurmountable problems of re-supply. Each of the small groups is susceptible of being destroyed in detail and of [not] accomplishing its mission.

Brereton said that as an airman he opposed such a concept due to problems of finding numerous drop zones, and supplying and defending against flak on scattered drop zones. His own views (or those of Williams) had dominated drop-zone and route selection. He said:

> I propose to group the three Divisions in following areas: ARNHEM, NIJMEGEN, UDEN, so that each may be capable of assembly [into] sectors of divisional action in least practicable time and that two divisions will be mutually supporting. The Divisions at NIJMEGEN and UDEN will be capable of strong coordinated offensive action to the Southeast.

Brereton's concerns, however, were not simply tactical. He and Ridgway were still intent on "selling" airborne for an American operation at MARKET's expense. Parks noted:

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[699] MHI, *Papers of Clay Blair* (author of *Ridgway's Paratroopers*); Letter BG Stuart Cutler to Clay Blair, 20 February 1984, 5. Cutler is incorrect as to the time of day that Brereton was informed of MARKET. Taylor does not mention incident in his diary.

> Ridgway has talked to Bradley and Hodges. There is a strong desire to support the bridges across the RHINE in about ten days. If the American Division[s] go in MARKET I will have left only the 17th [US] and 6th [British] Airborne, both in very inferior state of training. I recommend, if possible, that one Division be kept out of Market.[700]

Parks brought up the topic at SHAEF, gaining Smith's and Bull's concurrence on the 101st dispersed drop, but neither intended overruling the Army Group commander's plans, feeling that Montgomery should have the final say. Smith refused the idea of removing a division from MARKET, stating that the entire Airborne Army was available to Montgomery until he crossed the Rhine. Smith, however, agreed to ensure that Montgomery returned the airborne divisions after MARKET.[701]

Brereton wrote Dempsey concerning his objections and ordered Taylor and Parks to see Dempsey on 12 September, an action unknown to Browning. American objections to MARKET were not the only reevaluations of the operation underway. While the airmen and ground commanders met to plan the air operation, Montgomery met with Graham, his logistician, and was given stunning news. GARDEN could not go forward until 23 September unless SHAEF increased 21 Army Group's supplies. Monty immediately signaled Eisenhower:

> I have investigated my maintenance situation very carefully since our meeting yesterday. Your decision that the northern thrust towards the RUHR is NOT to have priority over other operations will have certain repercussions. . . . The large scale operations by Second Army and the

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[700] *Parks Diary*, 11 September 1944: Record of Telephone Conversation, General Brereton-General Parks, 1630 hrs, 11 September, 1944. Parks was at SHAEF when phoned by Brereton and immediately registered his commander's views.

[701] Ibid.; Smith and Bull had no brief to "approve" drop zones, as tactics was not SHAEF's responsibility. Parks was no doubt lining up support in case the British demanded that their plan be accepted in toto. This also flies in the face of the alleged American principle of "never telling a subordinate commander" how to execute a mission, a myth commonly repeated by historians. Smith, who generally acted on the logic of arguments rather than on their national basis, was correct to say that Montgomery should have the final say. As will be seen, Monty had delegated the "say" to Dempsey, who was the officer in tactical command.

> Airborne Army northwards towards the Meuse and Rhine cannot now take place before 23 September at the earliest and possibly 26 September. This delay will give the enemy time to organize better defensive arrangements and we must expect heavier resistance and slower progress. . . . Above facts show you that if enemy resistance continues to stiffen as at present then NO great results can be expected until we have built up stocks of ammunition and other requirements.[702]

The courses of action open to Eisenhower were clear: he could cancel MARKET and perhaps redirect the operations for the entire front, opt for a later and obviously less promising operation if the worsening fall weather permitted it, or back Montgomery with enough logistical support to push the operation forward but no more. Neither man would have expected a shift to a northern concentrated thrust. Eisenhower intended to send Smith to see Montgomery to organize support for GARDEN and apparently did not answer the signal.[703]

This decision was not made in isolation. That day Ike held a bedside conference with Bradley, Smith, Bull, and Strong to decide if Patton's army should be curtailed to support Crerar's in supply. No decision was made.[704] The 12th of September, therefore, would become a critical day, at every level from theater to division, as key decisions were made not just in relation to MARKET GARDEN, but in shaping Bradley's operations as well.

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[702] EL, Correspondence File, M-192, Sept. 11, 1944. Dempsey spent the 11th reviewing his administration, and visited his corps commanders to inform them operations would not begin prior to 23 September unless he received additional supplies; *Dempsey Diary*, 11 SEP 44; *21 Army Group Administrative History*, 37-39, 47.

[703] No response is filed in Eisenhower's correspondence, nor does Montgomery mention receiving a signal in his memoirs.

[704] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, fn. 1, 2130. No memorandum for this meeting exists either in the crucial Post Overlord 381 file or in Bradley's Operations Plans and Memoranda. Eisenhower was bedridden with his knee injury.

On 12 September Eisenhower received approval from the CCS of his SCAEF 78 signal (9 September) outlining his broad front strategy. The Chiefs, in their reply, drew attention:

> (a) To the advantages of the Northern line of approach into GERMANY, as opposed to the Southern. They note with satisfaction that you appear to be of the same mind.
>
> (b) To the necessity for opening of the Northwest ports, and particularly ANTWERP and ROTTERDAM before the bad weather sets in.[705]

Eisenhower received a second message in the form of a letter from Bradley on 13 September, downplaying Montgomery's comments on the slow movement of XIX Corps, a fact he attributed to the requirement to build bridges near Liege and to some petrol shortages. He noted that:

> First Army states that they now have on hand sufficient ammunition for five days' fighting and enough petrol to carry them to the Rhine. With the supplies coming forward even at their present rate, he [Hodges] should be capable of a considerable effort for a week or ten days without any reliance upon air supply.
>
> Third Army states that they have enough ammunition on hand or in immediate sight for about four days fighting and enough petrol to carry them to the Rhine.[706]

Bradley noted his intent to shift Patton's boundary northward and to concentrate the three armies—First Third, and Ninth—after Seventh Army was able to move northward from 6th Army Group. More important, Bradley described that

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[705] RG 331 Post Overlord 381, I, SHAEF Incoming Message, Reference OCTAGON 16, 12 September 1944; EP IV. 2124-2128. Eisenhower had told the chiefs, "The first operation [of his campaign plan] is one to break the Siegfried Line and seize crossings over the Rhine. In doing this, the main effort will be on the left. Then we will prepare logistically and otherwise for a deep thrust into Germany." Thus, Montgomery was correct in assuming that operations north of the Ardennes would receive priority and that the Saar operation would be a secondary effort whose support should not have hampered either Dempsey or Hodges. Bradley's actions, supported by Eisenhower, belied this.

Hodges had received more supplies than Patton, averaging 3,300 tons versus 2,500, and that the projected increase in supplies of 2,000 tons daily for the Army Group would be divided to favor First Army. Patton's advance towards the Moselle, he noted, would be stopped if he had not achieved a bridgehead by 14 September.[707]

From Eisenhower's perspective, his Double Thrust was continuing to work, and Montgomery's plan could go forward without hindering the American advance. These two operations, in Eisenhower's mind, continued to be independent and not complementary, and XIX Corps, as Bradley had stated, was to continue its flank guard mission for First Army "due to the gap" between Army Groups. Bradley, in fact, had no intention of stopping Patton's advance to favor Hodges, and had conspired with the Third Army commander to keep it going, knowing that Eisenhower would never halt his friend's success. The issue of fuel and supply priority was also falsified. Bradley had kept the logistics priorities even and during the period 10 to 16 September, the difference in fuel deliveries favored First Army by only 32,440 gallons, or roughly 4,600 gallons per day, during a period where nearly a million gallons of fuel were issued to the two armies.[708]

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[706] Ibid., Letter Bradley to Eisenhower, 12 September 1944, 1. Receipt time of this letter is stamped 13 September at SHAEF. Bradley's claim that XIX Corps was supported was untrue, nor did his description of affairs fit First US Army's situation or the orders of its commander.

[707] Ibid., 2, 3.

[708] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Pogue interview with Bradley, 1; *Patton Diary*, September 12, 1944; Patton, *War As I Knew It*, 130; CMH MS, Study No. 21, Thompson, "ETO Field Commands Gasoline Status, August-September 1944."

The 12th of September appeared to signal an improvement in the operational situation at 21 Army Group. Le Havre fell, netting 10,000 prisoners. The operation had been a major Joint Operation launched by First Canadian Army and the RAF.[709]

Smith had assured Montgomery's execution of his plan, as was Eisenhower's wish. On 12 September at Monty's headquarters, Smith had promised 1,000 tons of supplies delivered daily to the Brussels railhead. Monty, taking this as a major change concerning strategy, noted:

> Bedel[l] Smith was sent to see me and promised everything that I had been asking for weeks; the northern thrust against the RUHR is at last to be given priority.[710]

Unmentioned, either in his diary or to Brooke via an "M" signal, were Smith's concerns about German strength in the Arnhem area. Smith pointed out the increasing strength of the enemy, and asked if the spearhead could be made stronger with added airborne troops landed around Arnhem.[711] He did not argue for MARKET's cancellation or express disapproval of the general concept of the plan at the time.

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[709] Report by Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, 8 November, 1944 covering Operations of First Army from 2-30 September 1944, 1-4; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 132-136; Stacey, *Victory Campaign*, III, 329-336; Canadian Army Historical Report No. 146, 40-44.

[710] *Montgomery Log*, 12 September; EL, Correspondence, M-197, 122000 Sept. Montgomery thanked Eisenhower for assistance and designated 17 September as D-Day for MARKET.

[711] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Interview S.L.A. Marshall with Walter B. Smith, 10-19. Smith noted: "I went up personally to talk to MONTGOMERY about it [Market]. Our G-2 indicated that there were parts of 3 armored divisions in and around where the First Airborne was to drop. Montgomery ridiculed the idea and laughed me out of the tent. But GENERAL STRONG was right about it. We thought the drop was too weakly weighted but MONTGOMERY laughed at the idea." In a 1947 interview with Forrest Pogue, Smith repeated the three-armored-division strength, but said 21 Army Group Intelligence people denied this. Maj.-Gen. Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top: The Recollections of an Intelligence Officer* (London: Cassell, 1968), 149, notes that Eisenhower told Strong to accompany Smith to see Montgomery, but that Smith raised the objections concerning enemy strength alone in conversation with Monty. Strong does not mention date and no corrobarative evidence has been found by author in Montgomery's papers, Smith's papers, the War Diary of 21 Army Group, or the Chief of Staff's records of meetings at SHAEF that a separate trip, beyond the 12 September visit, was ever made. Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 158, Lamb, *Montgomery in Europe*, 226, and others have painted this trip as almost a "stay of execution" request made on 15 September in light of ULTRA evidence. Lamb

Intelligence on 12 September, however, was not as clear as was later claimed. Williams, the 21 Army Group G-2, published Intelligence Summary No. 159 that day, the first since 28 August. Arnhem had been an "intelligence target" since 6 September, when Williams first briefed the known enemy situation there for COMET. Williams didn't like the plan, but found no reason to call for its disapproval. On 12 September, Williams noted that the best defense for the Rhine, as being practiced by the enemy, was the denial of sea ports by the enemy, noting that Walcheren Island had now been added to the list of "fortresses." He noted that the secondary line of defense consisted of the water lines forward of the Rhine and "the somewhat mossy West Wall." He reported that the German press had touted that the Allies did not intend to seek a decision in the Ruhr,

> but on the Southern flank along the Longwy-Toul line by tearing open the West Wall on the upper Rhine and in the Saar and Palatinate.

Williams noted that German reinforcements, in the form of new division identifications, two panzer grenadier divisions from Italy, and possibly the 21 Panzer division, were located in this sector. Model, the new C-in-C West, had issued an order of the day stating:

> At this time the Fuhrer needs to bring new troops and new weapons into operation. Soldiers, we must gain time for the Fuhrer.[712]

The advance of 30 Corps had cut off escaping infantry moving toward the coast; the panzer divsions already withdrawn from the line had no reported fate. Williams

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is incorrect in a number of facts concerning intelligence and dates; Ryan was unaware of ULTRA and perhaps relied upon Eisenhower's memory or fabricated the date. As Ryan was unware of ULTRA, and Eisenhower, Montgomery, Brereton, and Strong were unaware of the photos seen by Brian Urquhart, it is probable that the 15 September meeting never happened.

[712] 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 159, 12 Sep 44, 1.

assessed the seven divisions identified blocking the Antwerp approach as equivalent to three divisions. The remnants of 1, 2, and 12 SS Panzer Divisions were identified in retreat in front of First Army, and 116th Panzer southeast of Liege. Williams' map indicated that the greatest panzer strength in identified "divisions" was between Aachen and Trier. South of Eindhoven, "Para and GAF elts [elements] were noted, with 6 Para [regt] on the flank."[713] Second Army's Intelligence Summary for the same day reflected the same dispositions but offered no information concerning panzer division refits or locations.[714]

First Allied Airborne Army's G-2 noted no additional dispositions; but repeated information concerning newly formed panzer brigades being rebuilt from division shells (with 33 panther tanks and 11 assault guns in a panzer battalion plus a panzer grenadier battalion). This was believed to be the extent to which divisions might be rebuilt. This information was passed on to 1 and XVIII Airborne Corps.[715]

Thus, as far as estimates were concerned, MARKET GARDEN, with its enhanced ground and airborne components, appeared to be a viable operation, its added strength offsetting the reorganizing enemy. ULTRA had tracked the reorganization plans of C-in-C West for panzers with decrypts on 5 and 6 September, locating 2d and 116th Panzer in Holland and noting that 9 SS and 10 SS Panzer would refit in Holland in the Venlo-Arnhem-s'Hertogenbosch area. Its parent organization, II SS Panzer Corps, was said to oversee the refit from Eindhoven. By the time of

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[713] Ibid., 2-3, overlay, "Enemy Dispositions, 12 Sep."

[714] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 100, up to 2400 hrs. 12 Sep 44, part II Order of Battle.

[715] NARA, RG 331, First Airborne Army G-2 Summary No. 8, 11 Sep 44, 2; Summary No. 9, 12 Sep 44. The same information concerning panzer brigades is included in Second Army Summary, No. 100, 12 September 1944.

Smith's visit, 2d and 116th Panzer were located on the American's front and neither 9 SS or 10 SS Panzer had been located. Concerning their importance to MARKET GARDEN, the estimate made by Williams was crucial:

> 9 SS and 10 SS were last identified in the great retreat on First US Army front. There cannot be much left of them. What there is is out of the line and may have found its way into Holland.[716]

At the division level, assigning drop zones went ahead, but the Taylor-Parks visit to Dempsey not only prompted another personal rift, but substantially changed the original concept for MARKET. Upon reading Brereton's letter demanding changes, Dempsey said, "Yes, absolutely." The new drop zones would land the 101st Airborne Division minus a combat team between Eindhoven and Breugel, with the task of seizing bridges at both localities. A combat team landing at Veghel would link the 101st to the 82d Airborne. Dempsey noted that though he had patrols within five miles of Eindhoven, he intended no further advance that would alert the enemy and prompt the demolition of the first bridge.[717] Later that day, Dempsey coordinated the move of O'Connor's 8 Corps to the right of 30 Corps. That evening, the decision to launch MARKET on 17 September was made by Montgomery and Dempsey at 21 Army Group. FAAA, that morning, had ruled out any discussion of a night drop due to a "no-moon" period.[718]

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[716] 21 Army Group Intelligence Summary No. 159, 12 September 1944, 3. This was the last summary published by Williams prior to MARKET GARDEN.

[717] *Parks Diary*, 12 September 1944. The actual letter cannot be found in the *Parks Diary* of FAAA records, but can be found at CARL, as part of Document RS-17582. Hqs FAAA, 11 September 1944, "Short Estimate of the Airborne Operation 'Market'." The *Parks Diary* essentially excerpts parts of the letter in the diary text.

[718] *Dempsey Diary*, 12 SEP 44; NDU *Diary of Major General Maxwell Taylor*, September 12, 13, 1944; *Parks Diary*; Minutes of Staff Conference at FAAA, 0900 hrs, 12 Sept. 44. Dempsey does not mention the decision to change the 101st mission or the visit of Taylor and Parks. Taylor defined the new mission in his diary as, "holding of three points only canal crossings from E[indhoven]." A

The 13th of September was used to finalize the plan for MARKET GARDEN and to harmonize thinking at theater level with that of the Army Groups.

The Second Army staff conference, held at 1500 hours published the final plan. (See figure 43.) The confirmatory notes stated:

> OBJECT OF THE SECOND ARMY
>
> To place Second Army including airborne forces astride the Rivers MEUSE, WAAL and NEDER RHINE on the general axis GRAVE [coordinates deleted]-NIJMEGEN-ARNHEM and to dominate the country between the RHINE and the ZUYDER ZEE thus cutting off communications between GERMANY and HOLLAND.[719]

Dempsey designated Zero Hour at 1300 hours on 17 September. Prior to the launch, 12 Corps would continue clearing the area up to the Meuse Canal and establish a bridgehead over it. 8 Corps would move onto 30 Corps' right, assuming control of 11 Armoured Division in place. For the GARDEN phase, Dempsey ordered that:

> *British Airborne Corps:*
>
> 1 Airborne Division including Polish Parachute Brigade capture bridges over NEDER RHINE at ARNHEM and to dominate the surrounding country.
>
> 82 US Airborne Division is to capture bridges over MEUSE and WAAL in area GRAVE and NIJMEGEN and dominate intervening area.
>
> The plan for the employment of 101 US Airborne Division will be made direct between Commander 101 Airborne Division and Commander 30 Corps. Commander 101 US Airborne Division arrives BRUSSELS 1100 hrs. 14 Sep.

"combat team" in US parlance was a regiment plus artillery and combat service support elements. A US regiment had three battalions. Taylor apparently had to be ordered by Brereton to brief Browning on changes. Browning was justifiably indignant that he had neither been informed nor allowed to discuss the plan with Dempsey.

[719] NAC, RG 24, Volume 20420, File 969.(D24) Ops 2nd British Army-Sep/Dec 44, Notes on Chief of Staff's Conference at Second Army at 1500 hrs. 13 SEP 44, dtd 14 Sep 44.

30 Corps

101 US Airborne Division is to capture and dominate all crossings over obstacles on the main axis of 30 Corps i.e. road HECHEL-EINDHOVEN-VEGHEL-UDEN-GRAVE.

30 Corps will pass rapidly through the corridor established by British Airborne Corps and 101 US Airborne Division [under command, 30 Corps] and will establish itself on the high ground in the area between ARNHEM and the ZUYDER ZEE.

> [8 Corps] will progressively relieve 30 Corps of responsibility for its RIGHT flank and will capture initially WEERT and SOERENDONK. 8 Corps will later advance as far NORTH as the MEUSE and possibly beyond.
>
> [12 Corps] will progressively relieve 30 Corps of responsibility for its LEFT flank and will capture initially RETHY, ARENDONCK and TURNHOUT and later advance as far NORTH as the MEUSE and possibly beyond.[720]

Lacking adequate aircraft and glider tows, the crucial airborne operation would be spread over three days, with the first drop taking place on D-Day, the second the morning of D+1, and the third the morning of D+2. While 83 Group, RAF, would provide close air support, US close air support parties would be also be present in the airborne formations and at Second Army. 30 Corps would carry enough bridging to span the three major water obstacles but would move it forward only on order as needed. Bridges captured would be supplemented by new-built bridges; bridges blown would be built if the bridgeheads were held by airborne troops, and bridgeheads assaulted if the bridges were demolished and not held by the airborne.[721]

The same day, Browning issued his final Operation Instruction No. 1, confirming command arrangements and missions already given, but noting that 101st Airborne would

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[720] Ibid., 2, 3.

[721] Ibid., 3, 4. Additional details have been omitted. The entire order was six pages long.

> seize bridges and defiles on 30 Corps' main axis of advance to ensure the speedy pass-through of that corps to the GRAVE-NIJMEGEN and ARNHEM crossings. Definite locations will be notified shortly.[722]

The 101st would be subordinate to Airborne Corps for the flight and drop, and to 30 Corps for ground operations until returned to 1 Airborne Corps by Second Army.

The unity of the original commander's intent, the bridge coups de main that would help lay "an airborne carpet," had been broken—a fact unknown to Montgomery at this time as oversight for all operational planning had passed to Dempsey. On the operational level, Monty felt he was being both supported and enthusiastically helped by both Eisenhower and Bradley. Bradley visited Monty on 13 September—a satisfactory meeting, according to Monty, who recorded in his log, "He is a most awfully nice chap." As in most dealings with Bradley, Monty did not notice that the Trojan Horse tactics of appearing to be friendly and then working against him were at play, a fact that he did not realize until much later.[723]

Ike's own message to Monty that day also bespoke encouragement and confidence. He promised 500 tons by road, and 500 tons by air except during MARKET, to the 21 Army Group until 1 October, and that he would assist in freeing up airborne forces for opening the Scheldt or providing some other support.[724] The same day, Eisenhower sent a further directive to his commanders, amplifying his 9

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[722] CARL, Document RS-11583, HQS AIRTRPS/TS, Operation Market Operation Instruction No. 1.

[723] *Montgomery Log*, 13 September; *Hansen Diary*, 13 September; Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 416-418. Hansen records Ridgway's aide as describing his dislike of Browning, and that XVIII Corps' commander wanted to jump on the Rhine bridges in Bradley's sector. No contemporary record of Bradley's action towards cancelling MARKET are extant, though he claims in his 1951 ghosted memoirs that he called Eisenhower claiming that Monty had left him holding the bag on their "previously planned joint offensive." Considering that Bradley had stripped XIX Corps of a division and that XIX Corps was short of fuel, this is a preposterous claim.

[724] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2133-2135.

September directive. He listed as possible options "a single knife-like or narrow thrust" or

> to drive forward through the enemy's western frontiers to suitable positions on which we can regroup while preparing the maintenance facilities that will sustain the great bulk of our forces on the drive into Germany.

Any operations, he felt, required the development of ports to support the advance, with the Northern Group clearing the Channel ports and Antwerp, the Central Group, Brest, and the Southern Group, Marseilles. While assuring the understanding that Antwerp was a requirement for a northern thrust to the Ruhr, he delineated both a maneuver scheme and specific tasks to outline his campaign:

> The general plan . . . is to push our forces forward to the Rhine, securing bridgeheads over the river, seize the Ruhr and concentrate our forces in preparation for a final non-stop drive into Germany. While this is going on we must secure bases. . . .
>
> The maneuver plan is to push hard over the Rhine on our northern flank with Northern Group of Armies, First US Army and the First Allied Airborne Army, with the Third US Army, except for a limited advance explained below, confined to holding and threatening action until initial objectives on the left are attained.
>
> Northern Group of Armies, swinging generally northward from its present position, will advance promptly to seize a bridgehead over the Rhine and prepare to seize the Ruhr.
>
> The Central Group of Armies must push its right only far enough, for the moment, so as to hold adequate bridgeheads beyond the Moselle and thus create a constant threat to the German forces and prevent the enemy from reinforcing further north by taking troops away from the Metz area. As quickly as this is accomplished all possible resources of the Central Group of Armies must be thrown to the support of the drive of the First US Army to seize Bridgeheads near Cologne and Bonn, in preparation for assisting in the capture of the Ruhr.
>
> After Northern Group of Armies and First US Army have seized bridgeheads over the Rhine the Third US Army will advance through the Saar and establish bridgeheads across the Rhine. If, at an earlier

date, maintenance of the Third US Army becomes possible, this advance will be initiated at that time.

After attainment of the Moselle bridgeheads above directed, operations on our left will, until the Rhine bridgeheads are won, take priority in all forms of logistical support except for (a) adequate security measures and continuous reconnaissance by forces on the right; (b) necessary resources for the securing and developing ports.[725]

Montgomery immediately acknowleged Eisenhower's directive, thanking him for his assistance, and noting that 500 tons' road lift would be needed until 7 October when rail across the Seine would be in operation, and that he had coordinated his operations with Bradley. Most important, he stated:

> Am arranging to develop as early as possible operations designed to enable the port of Antwerp to be used. Now that Havre is captured am moving Headquarters First [Canadian] Army and 49th Division up to Antwerp at once. Am grounding and immobilizing 51st Division at Havre and using the whole of its transport to enable this move to take place.[726]

From the Supreme Commander's perspective, 21 Army Group was moving to seize his primary objectives, and was accelerating attempts to clear the coast and move on to clearing the Scheldt to open Antwerp. Two huge movements were in train—one to clear the coastal ports and begin the clearance of Antwerp's approaches, and one to gain a bridgehead over the Rhine. From the perspective of any planner or commander, the message clearly implied that the British airborne drop and the First Army drive constituted the Allied Main Effort, and were a concerted part of the same maneuver "to push hard over the Rhine on our northern flank."[727]

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[725] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2136-2138. This message has been reproduced only in its key parts, and enumeration has been removed from the paragraphs. It was transmitted to the CCS and British Chiefs of Staff as Msg SCAF 81.

[726] EL, Correspondence, M.205, 141000 Sept.

[727] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2137.

Bradley did not react enthusiastically to the directive despite his foreknowledge of its contents. His aide, Hansen, recorded his commander's ire with the Eisenhower plan to weight the left flank, saying:

> Brad is opposed to this, sensing the possibility of a breakthrough in the V Corps sector where sharp penetrations have already been made or in the area of the 3rd Army which then may pinch the Ruhr from the south and plunge through to the Rhine. Ike, however, has his heart set with Monty on main effort to the north. Where penetration has now been made by 4th Division and 28th Division into the Siegfried Line there is every indication that Line is not sufficiently manned. [Refers here to Luxembourg] G-2 has estimated that the German cannot muster strength in the line until first week of October. Essential therefore we break through now. Brad's plan is to favor the First Army with supply for main effort in their sector which Ike prefers but he does not wish to weaken the Third Army which reported today that it crossed in strength. . . . Patton swears, "There is nothing in front of us; we can go clear through to the Rhine."[728]

Montgomery's own operational design was completed and discussed with his army commanders on 14 September, after which he issued the written directive, M.525, that constituted his design for "the MARKET GARDEN Campaign." (See figure 44.) In his general summary, he assigned clearing the mouth of the Scheldt as the First Priority for the Canadian First Army. He emphasized:

> *Our real objective, therefore, is the RUHR.* But on the way to it we want the ports of ANTWERP and ROTTERDAM, since the capture of the RUHR is merely the first step on the northern route of advance into Germany.
>
> *Intention.*

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[728] *Hansen Diary*, September 14th. He records the next day that Bradley "represents the American view," and that Bradley's reply to being carried along with Montgomery's operation is "I will not have the tail wag the dog." Bradley's view of his supply problems continued to be "COMZ is not doing its job." Patton's claims of a clear advance into Germany were false. His own intelligence then portrayed the effective combat strength in front of his three corps as equating to eight divisions, with 67,500 men in defense with 90 tanks and assault guns. The G-2 further estimated an available reserve equating to six divisions with 53,500 combatants and 80 tanks. See *Third Army After Action Report, II*, Staff Reports, LXV, 13 September Intelligence Estimate: Estimate of Enemy Strength in Third US Army Zone.

To destroy all enemy west of the general line ZWOLLE-DEVENTER-CLEVE-VENLO-MAASTRICHT, with a view to advancing eastwards and occupying the RUHR.

First Canadian Army

8. Complete the capture first of BOULOGNE, and then of CALAIS.

9. DUNKIRK will be left to be dealt with later; for the present it will be merely masked.

10. The whole energies of the Army will be directed towards operations designed to enable full use to be made of the port of ANTWERP.

Airborne troops are available to cooperate.

14. Subsequently [to clearance of North Holland and ROTTERDAM], Canadian Army will be brought up on the left (or northern) flank of Second Army, and will be directed on BREMEN and HAMBURG.

Second British Army

15. The first task of the Army is to operate northwards and secure the crossings over the RHINE and MEUSE in the general area ARNHEM-NIJMEGEN-GRAVE. An airborne corps of three divisions is placed under command Second Army for these operations.

16. The Army will then establish itself in strength on the general line ZWOLLE-DEVENTER-ARNHEM, facing east, with deep bridgeheads to the east side of the IJSSEL river.

From this position it will be prepared to advance eastwards to the general area RHEINE-OSNABRUCK-HAMM-MUNSTER.

In this movement its weight will be on its right and directed towards HAMM, from which place a strong thrust will be made southwards along the eastern face of the RUHR.

17. The thrust northwards to secure the river crossings . . . will be rapid and violent, and without regard to what is happening on the flanks.

Subsequently the Army will take measures to widen the area of the initial thrust, and to create a secure line of supply.

12 Army Group

19. First US Army is to move eastwards as follows:

(a) 5 Corps is directed on BONN.

(b) 7 Corps is directed on COLOGNE.

(c) 19 Corps carrying out flank protection on the northern flank of the Army, along the inter-Army Group boundary.

20. The Army is to capture BONN and COLOGNE, and to establish a deep bridgehead, some 10 miles in depth, on the east side of the RHINE.

21. The Army is then to advance eastwards round the south face of the RUHR. This operation will be timed so as to be coordinated carefully with the move of Second British Army round the north face of the RUHR.

There will be very close touch between General Bradley and myself during these operations.[729]

Receipt of Eisenhower's message concerning supplies that morning, plus his own M.525, solidified Montgomery's campaign concept though he had not yet received the 13 September campaign directive from Eisenhower. Dempsey, who had decided not to press on to Eindhoven to prevent a stirred hornet's nest, continued regroupment and detailed coordination with his corps commanders. To the south, Hodges, whose G-4 had informed him the army had eaten down its supply reserves, had stopped V Corps' advance due to artillery ammunition shortages. Hodges, however, permitted "Lightning Joe" Collins in VII Corps to conduct a "reconnaissance in force," a mission which was extended to V Corps while XIX Corps remained static. VII Corps penetrated the West Wall in the Stolberg corridor south of Aachen, but soon found itself stopped by German reserves. The V Corps, which had penetrated the Ardennes, soon halted, but by 13 September, the nature of battle had changed. First Army was now facing a stronger enemy and the pursuit was over. On 17 September, Hodges shut down operations on First Army's front in order

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[729] M.525, 14-9-44, 1-3; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2134. This is an abbreviated form of the directive maintaining original paragraph enumeration but excerpting some detail. It is important to note that Montgomery's statement concerning close touch with Bradley is neither a wish nor an unauthorized statement. Eisenhower promised such in his 13 September message.

to build up supplies. Bradley's logistics shift to Patton had permitted the Germans to bar the door in the Maastricht-Aachen-Stolberg corridors. The main gateway into Germany was closed.[730]

As troops moved to airfield staging areas and gliders were loaded, the final details of the airborne division plans were briefed. Upon these divisions, the "airborne carpet," the true fate of MARKET GARDEN rested.

Taylor's published plan for the 101st Airborne solidified his modified role for his division. It accounted for a three-day lift using 432 parachute aircraft and 70 glider tows (Waco, CG4A gliders) on D-Day, 450 gliders on D+1, and 382 gliders on D+2. (See figure 45.) It listed as its concept of operations:

> 101st Airborne Division will land by parachute and glider in daylight on D, D+1, and D+2 Days, in the Zon-Vechel area with the mission of seizing and holding the principal stream and canal crossings at EINDHOVEN, ZON, and VECHEL in order to assist the advance of the British 2nd Army northward along the EINDHOVEN-GRAVE highway.[731]

On D-Day, three parachute infantry regiments would land: the 501st on DZ "A"; the 502nd on DZ "C"; and the 506th on DZ "B". The northern force landing on DZ "A" would secure the canal and stream crossings in the Vechel area. These included two rail bridges to the west and northwest of the town as well as small bridges spanning the Aa River and Willems Vaart Canal. This force and its captured objectives would provide the key link between the two American divisions. The northernmost of two concentrated drop zones, DZ "C" was used to constitute the

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[730] *FUSA Report of Operations Aug 44–Feb 45, I*, 38-46, Map No. 5, LIEGE-AACHEN-DUREN; Hogan, *A Command Post at War*, 147-149; Collins, *Lightning Joe*, Chapter XIII, passim.

division reserve, and block the Zon-St. Oederode Road, as well as to seize the small bridge south of the town on the Dommel River. From there, a detachment would also be sent to the southwest to capture the bridge at Best spanning the Wilhelmina Canal, an alternate route for 30 Corps' advance. But the DZ "B" force was key. It would capture not only the Zon bridge on the Wilhelmina, but would have to march south to Eindhoven to capture the city and take the Dommel River bridges south of the town.[732]

None of the 101st objective bridges was large, but each would require a replacement span or bailey bridge if the original was blown by the enemy. The key link for the 101st on Club Route was the Zon Bridge. The bridge, with trees and a built-up area between the target and the drop zone, was not planned as a coup-de-main target. A flat field, suitable either for paratroops or several gliders, lay directly to the east of the north end of the bridge but was not used.

Taylor's plan concentrated his division for the drop, but it placed no unit near its primary objective for a coup de main. The Zon bridge, the first of the southern bridges, was about 1 to 1.2 miles straight-line distance from the edge of Drop Zone B and was separated from it by a patch of the Zonche woods and the small clump of houses at Otiesburg. The series of small bridges at the southern end of Eindhoven lay

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[731] NARA, RG 407, Decimal 3101-3.9, Field Order #1 with Annexes, MARKET-101st Airborne Division, 14 September 1944.

[732] Ibid.

about eight miles from the Zon bridge. Valkenswaard was six miles south of Eindhoven and seven miles north of the 30 Corps start line for Club Route.[733]

The original outline plan for MARKET agreed to by Montgomery, Dempsey, and Browning had placed the 101st's southern objective and southern drop zones near Valkenswaard, both to shorten the linkage distance to 30 Corps, and to provide a close envelopment of the enemy's rear area, approximately where one would expect to find the enemy artillery gun line and close combat reserves. GARDEN, unlike COMET, was not designed to start at Eindhoven. Taylor's protest assured a full 20-mile cushion of enemy terrain between Horrocks' lead tanks and the 101st Airborne first lift, not the seven miles desired by Montgomery and Dempsey. More importantly, Taylor's plan lengthened the distance that Guards Armoured Division would be expected to fight to a minimum of 13 miles.[734]

The intelligence estimate for the 101st, based heavily on photographs, accurately pinpointed antiaircraft threats, obstacles, and visible minor defenses, including weapons pits, slit trenches, and a number of probable machine gun locations. Its accompanying map trace displayed the division's only enemy order of battle information, but no tactical analysis was offered. It showed that in front of 8 Corps, three "divisions"—3 Para with 1,000 men, 354th Infantry with 8,000 men, and the 272d Infantry in depth with 1,000 men. Around the nose of the 30 Corps salient pointed at Eindhoven were the 2d SS Panzer Grenadier "division" with 3,000 men and

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[733] All terrain descriptions are based on 1944 maps and photos. The original road has been overbuilt, Valkenswaard is now essentially a suburb of Eindhoven, the southern bridges are within the town, and Otiesburg is now a small village.

30 tanks; the 9 SS Panzer Grenadier "Division" with 1,500 men and 10 tanks, and the 10 SS Panzer Grenadier "Division" with 1,000 men and five tanks. Between the Wilhelmina Canal and the Maas, it displayed the 509 Security "Battalion" as "unlocated."[735]

Gavin's 82d Airborne Field Order, published on 13 September, listed its concept of operations (see figure 46):

> 82d US A/B Div, (less dets), will land by Prcht and Gli commencing D Day S of NIJMEGEN; seize and hold the hwy bridges across the MAAS River at GRAVES [sic] and the WAAL River at NIJMEGEN; seize, organize, and hold the high ground between NIJMEGEN and GROESBEEK; deny the roads in the Div area to the enemy; and dominate the area shown [overlay omitted of div. sector].[736]

Gavin divided the division into "Force A" and "Force B" for two separate lifts, with "A" landing on D-Day. Within Force A were the 505th Parachute Infantry, to land on DZ "N"; 504th Parachute Infantry, to land on DZ "O"; the 508th Parachute Infantry, to land on DZ "T" with a field artillery battalion and pathfinders to convert "T" into LZ "T" for the Force B landings. For the second day, "N" and "T" would be used for glider LZs to bring in the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment and two glider field artillery battalions.

As had Urquhart and Sosaboski before him, Gavin stipulated that one of the four bridges on the Maas-Waal must be seized. All four would be attacked in the

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[734] Under the original concept, Guards Armoured also would have been within the range fan of Army artillery groups; the Taylor variant required a shift of guns forward for support, an impossibility on a single road designed for a link and pursuit on the "stair carpet" envisaged by Montgomery.

[735] NARA, Field Order #1, op. cit., annex 10, Enemy Order of Battle (overlay).

[736] NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 12420, 82d A/B Div FO#11-Opn MARKET, 1.

hopes of seizing one intact.[737] (See figure 47.) Gavin's plan, while ensuring that the vital ground designated—the Groesbeek Ridge—was held, and that a secure link with the 101st was made, was a defensive plan that did nothing about the problem of Nijmegen or more important, to assure a coup de main of Nijmegen's vital road bridge. Gavin's drop-zone geometry theoretically created a 25-mile perimeter for the division, to be held by fewer than 7,300 men landing in the first lift. The planned drop zone nearest the Grave Bridge was almost two miles away; the nearest to the Nijmegen Bridge was between five and six. Gavin had wanted to send a battalion to the bridge, but Browning told him not to, stressing that securing the Grave Bridge and the Groesbeek Ridge had priority, and that losing either of them would cause the failure of GARDEN and the probable destruction of his division. The night before the operation, Gavin gave the regimental commander of the 508th Parachute Infantry oral orders to send a battalion to seize the bridge upon landing—an order the regimental commander understood was to be accomplished only after he had captured his primary objectives to the east of Groesbeek Ridge. No force, then, would press for the Nijmegen bridge in the early hours of the operation.[738]

The intelligence estimate of the 82d benefited from the British study of the area during COMET. The division G-2, Maj. Walter Winton, provided a prescient appreciation:

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[737] Gavin, *Airborne Warfare*, 97; Sosabowski, *Freely I Served*, 140-143.

[738] NARA, RG 319, Correspondence, CMH Files, The Siegfried Line Campaign; MHI, *Papers of Lieutenant General James M. Gavin*, Letter Gavin to Theater Historian, 25 July 1945; Letter to Chief of Military History from Lt. Gen. Browning, February 1955; Letter to Chief of Military History, Brig. Gen. R.E. Lindquist, 9 September 1955; author interview, 1999, with Lt. Gen. John Norton, who was the Division G-3 during MARKET. Gavin ordered a battalion sent to the bridge on the night of 17 September upon finding out the 508th had made no move to the bridge. Norton remembers that

It is reported that one of the broken Panzer divisions has been sent back to the area north of ARNHEIM [sic] to rest and refit; this might produce some 50 tanks. We may therefore reckon that the forces from ROTTERDAM to the German frontier might comprise a regt from 719 Div, a regt from 347 Div, remnants of 70 Div, a few mobile bns, some scraped up static troops and one Panzer division, much the worse for wear.

Noting that perhaps 4,000 SS training troops were believed to be in Nijmegen along with the units identified, he assessed:

> an estimate of a divisional strength in this area may not be far wide of the mark.[739]

Urquhart's 1 Airborne Division's plan was confirmed by Browning's last written instructions to 1 Airborne on 13 September designating three priority tasks in order: the capture of the Arnhem bridge or *a* bridge; the establishment of a bridgehead sufficient to permit the deployment of 30 Corps north of the Neder Rijn; and the destruction of the flak in the division sector to permit the safe passage of subsequent lifts. No junction point with the 82d to the south was established in order "to preserve . . . [the division's] southern bombline," thus permitting free-ranging air attacks between Nijmegen and Arnhem. No prediction or timescale for a linkup was predicted, only that:

> The time at which you are to expect junction with 30 Corps leading troops will be notified to you from Corps Headquarters as soon as it is definitely known.[740]

On 12 September Urquhart issued his plan dividing the force into three lifts, the first comprising 1 Parachute Brigade, 1 Airlanding Brigade, the Division's tactical

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Browning told him to await news of 30 Corps' position while securing his perimeter and waiting for the rest of his own division to arrive.

[739] NARA, 82d A/B F.O. 11, *op. cit.*, Annex 1 C, Order of Battle Summary, 11 September 1944, 1.

[740] PRO, WO 171-393, 1 Airborne Division Report, Annexure 'B': Operation "MARKET" Instruction No. 1, Hq. Airborne Troops (Main), 13 September 1944.

headquarters and the division recce squadron. A light field artillery battalion (less a battery) and engineers and assorted support would also go in. The second lift landing the next day would bring in 4 Parachute Brigade and the balance of the Airlanding brigade, light battalion, and resupply. The third lift would bring 1 Polish Parachute Brigade Group.[741] (See figure 48.)

1 Parachute Brigade would land on DZ "X." Its primary mission was to seize and hold in priority the main road bridge at Arnhem and a pontoon bridge located at the turn in the river, about one kilometer west of the road bridge. The rail bridge, about four miles southeast of the drop zones south of Osterbeek, was ignored, probably as it was outside the division's planned perimeter. After the seizure of the main road bridge, 1 Parachute Brigade would seize and hold DZ "K" southeast of the bridge for the arrival of the Polish brigade. 1 Airlanding Brigade would land on LZ "S" to secure LZs "S" and "Z" and DZ "X." Its primary responsibility would be to hold the division zone for the second lift, protecting DZs "Y" and "X" and LZs "S" and "Z." It would also protect the landing of Polish gliders on LZ "L" during the third lift. The division recce squadron, less a troop in reserve, would seize the Arnhem bridge in a coup de main under control of 1 Parachute Brigade. 21 Independent Parachute Company would mark all LZs and DZs. The glider pilots would form two battalions, one in division reserve and one under control of 1 Airlanding Brigade.[742] Following the issuance of Browning's written directive on 13 September, Urquhart issued additional instructions forbidding the destruction or preparation for destruction

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[741] Ibid. Annexure 'C': Operation 'MARKET' 1 Airborne Div Op Instr. No. 9, Confirmatory Notes on GOC's Verbal Orders, 12 Sept. 44, sheet 1.

[742] Ibid., sheets 3-4.

of bridges and directing that all ferries and barges in the division area be brought to the north bank "so as to safeguard them for future use."[743]

1 Airborne's situation, and hence its plan, was the most precarious of the three airborne divisions. While the 101st lay at the tip of a projected 20-mile advance, and the 82d at the tip of a 43-mile advance by 30 Corps, 1 Airborne had to count on Adair's armor moving 64 miles to reach the Arnhem bridge, and about 60 to link with the Polish brigade south of the town. While COMET had provided for the seizure of the Grave and Nijmegen bridges, MARKET's plan left Nijmegen for a later assault, and no "carpet" existed for the armor to roll up on the "island" between Nijmegen and Arnhem. Among the worst of the division's many plights was its forced dispersion. As its full strength could not arrive in less than three days, it would be three days at the earliest before it could consolidate itself. Its D-Day landing strength was three parachute and three airlanding battalions, with the latter remaining to protect the "airhead" for subsequent reinforcement and supply. The division's move to the objective, therefore, was a three-battalion attack separated on individual routes, to be followed by the movement and seizure of the northern half of Arnhem by 4 Parachute Brigade and the western section of Arnhem by 1 Airlanding Brigade, a total of six battalions and the balance of the division.

When Maj. Gen. Richard Gale, the GOC of 6 Airborne in Normandy, examined the plan on Browning's invitation, he was appalled, saying that the entire division should be dropped near the bridge or, at minimum, move to the bridge following a coup de main. He claimed he would resign if he had to carry out the 1

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[743] WO 171-393, Annexure 'K'; 1 Airborne Div. Op. Instr No. 10, Additional Notes on Operation

Airborne plan.[744] Still, Browning could offer no solace to Urquhart, nor was the conversation with Gale ever mentioned to him, for the airmen controlled the drop.

Hollinghurst had ruled out closer drop zones, and Williams had denied Hollinghurst's request for 38 and 46 Groups to fly double lifts on D-Day for the 1 Airborne, the second lift coming in at dark or later. More important, perhaps, was the assessment made that the ground south of Arnhem was unfit for mass glider landings due to ditches and the existence of few roads. The Horsa glider needed wheels to permit its heavy loads to be extracted by removing the tail assembly, a factor that ruled out "no wheels" landings on broken terrain. While it was a matter of later debate as to whether flak was the primary discriminator in landing so far from the objective, certainly the specter of dividing the division by the river—with parachutists landing on the island and gliders landing as planned—might have played heavily in consideration of gaining an airhead for the second lift. Given the slow buildup over three days necessitated by the lack of airlift, no one would risk splitting the division further. The British airhead would have to be north of the river.[745]

The signals capability of the division also promised a potential for disaster, a situation already well known from the planning for COMET. With drop zones ranging from five to eight miles from the objective, and the dispersal of the division's battalions, the short-range capability of the division's standard radio sets prohibited a

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MARKET, 13 Sep 44.

[744] *Red Berets '44* (London: The Illustrated London News, 1994), 72-73; Martin Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944: The Airborne Battle, 17-26 September* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 17, 18.

[745] Otway, *Airborne Forces*, 263, 292, 293.

controlled battle employing any form of reserve to exploit opportunity, to maneuver, or to prevent disaster.[746]

1 Airborne's intelligence had studied the sector since their warning order of 3 September. During COMET, division intelligence had appreciated that there were "seven mobile battalions" of 20 Mobile Brigade in the Zwolle-Zuthen area northeast of Arnhem. The intelligence officer also noted that the Germans had assessed the value of bypassing the West Wall defenses and assumed that portions of four divisions out of contact might be used to cover the river crossings:

> The GRAVE-NIJMEGEN-ARNHEM route therefore may be guarded by the best part of a low category division, possibly a mobile Bn and of course by Flak troops.[747]

This assessment was strengthened on the morning of 10 September with the commment that

> the fighting capacity of the new Battle Groups formed from the remnants of battered divisions seems unimpaired.[748]

On the eve of MARKET, the written assessment for 1 Parachute Brigade summarized the division's dilemma concerning enemy information:

> [A] reported concentration of 10,000 troops SW of ZWOLLE on 1 Sep may represent a battle scarred panzer division or two reforming, or alternately the result of the emptying of ARNHEM and EDE barracks to make room for fighting troops; though a likely role for the training units would appear to be digging the WAAL line.
>
> To sum up: there is no direct, recent evidence on which to base an estimate of troops in the immediate divisional area. The capacity of the

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[746] Lewis Golden, *Echoes from Arnhem* (London: William Kimber, 1984), VIII, passim.

[747] PRO, WO 171-393, 1 Airborne Division Planning Intelligence Summary No. 1, 6 September 1944, 1-2.

[748] PRO, WO 171-393, 1 Airborne Division Planning Intelligence Summary, 10 September 1944, 2.

normal barracks at ARNHEM, VELP and EDE is nearly 10,000 and billeting possibilities are considerable; moreover ARNHEM itself, if the enemy's main defensive line is on the WAAL, will be a vital centre on his L of C, and will inevitably contain a number of troops which are out of the line: it will be strongly defended as soon as the line is manned, but at present may be emptier while the available troops are digging trenches or conducting their fighting withdrawal from the ALBERT canal.[749]

Thus, from the perspective of the three airborne division commanders near week's end, each had discomforting plans, yet each hoped that the enemy would not recover sufficiently to prevent his success. Each saw a hazy collage of German forces, less frightening than those arrayed against NEPTUNE. Whatever personal terrors they had, they led their divisions in planning and rehearsals as if success were not just reachable but inevitable.

The ground force plan, GARDEN, left less flexibility in execution than the airborne plan. While dispersion and an attack from the sky might temporarily open doors to unforeseen opportunities for the airborne, Dempsey's plan called for a narrow sector attack by three divisions, the center division advancing on a single road. There was little doubt that the single road, Club Route, was key to GARDEN's success and the survival of 1 Airborne Corps, with 30 Corps' survival dependent not only on shattering the enemy defense throughout its depth, but on Horrocks' flanks being covered in a short amount of time by 8 and 12 Corps.

30 Corps Operations Instructions No. 24 replaced the original COMET ground plan. At its beginning, it outlined an intelligence picture estimating that:

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[749] PRO, WO 171-393, 1 Airborne Division Report, Annexure D: 1 Para. Bde. Intelligence Summary No. 1 dated 13 Sep 44, 2.

> The total German force, including both remnants of formations now quitting FRANCE and FLANDERS and reinforcements coming from GERMANY and satellites, is quite inadequate to offer prolonged resistance along any line.

While noting a division-sized force was probably being reconstituted, it noted also that its antiaircraft gunners would be poorly trained for antitank work, though it was estimated that:

> Enough is available for every major nodal and water crossing to be allotted a troop of six 88 mm.
>
> Armoured reserves of more than squadron size are most unlikely to appear on the corps front.[750]

Horrocks stated his intention:

> 30 Corps will advance when ordered at maximum speed and secure the area incl NUNSPELT . . . to excl ARNHEM.

Armored support in regimental strength would be attached to both the 101st and 82d upon arrival in their sectors. A second, subsidiary axis was provided part of the way, making the main axis DIAMOND. The subsidiary, HEART, which ran from Valkenswaard-Leende-Geldorp-Nunen-Gemert-Volkel, was to be used only by fighting troops. The intention was to switch traffic temporarily if part of the main route became unusable. The lead element of 30 Corps, Guards Armoured Division, was ordered to proceed at maximum speed to Arnhem, to bypass Appeldorn, and to dominate the area "NUNSPELT to excl APELDORN." If the major bridges (or bridge) were lost, 43 Division would assault and bridge the gap. 43 Division would advance on order at maximum speed, eventually consolidating from Apeldorn due

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[750] PRO, WO 171-341, 30 Corps Operation Instruction No. 24 Operation "GARDEN," 15 Sep 44, 1; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 98-99. This contains Horrocks' personal orders given to his

south to link with 1 Airborne north of Arnhem. The 50th Northumberland Division would follow and seize a river crossing over the Ijssel at Doermond. An extensive bridge train was available on order.[751]

GARDEN differed significantly both in scale and intent from COMET, but in each case the 30 Corps final objective was a bridgehead over the Rhine, with GARDEN adding an advance to the Zuider Zee. COMET planned a 51-mile advance beginning at Eindhoven, GARDEN a 99-mile thrust beginning south of the Belgian-Netherlands border. In the first plan, Dempsey had planned for a single division besides Guards Armoured and 1 Airborne to reach beyond the Neder Rijn, with the air-portable 52 Lowland Division (to be flown into Deelen airfield) adding perhaps 15 miles to the ground requiring capture. In the new plan, both the 43 and 50 Divisions were added to Guards Armoured to form the force north of the 1 Airborne with the 52 air-landing at Deelen. Under COMET, Horrocks had two mutually supporting armored divisions in the advance; now he had one, with the flank corps each having an armored division. Most significantly, Horrocks expected "to roll up the airborne carpet," with fully 40 of the first 64 miles dominated by airborne troops who would "pass" the rapidly moving armor forward. As such, and considering the narrowness of his sector, his Corps was march ordered for a pursuit, not a sustained attack. (See figure 43.) In COMET, he had expected to advance the first 30 miles without airborne support, but against neglible resistance and a retreating handful of stragglers or battered units.

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commanders on 16 September at Bourg Leopold. In these orders, Horrocks stressed the need to reach 1 Airborne in 48 hours if possible.

Only the enemy and weather seemed the unknown factors, and weather could be predicted and waited upon. Two ULTRA-capable headquarters, Brereton's First Allied Airborne Army and Dempsey's Second Army in operational control of MARKET GARDEN, published daily intelligence summaries. Of particular note for intelligence was the location and size of panzer divisions. On 13 September, Second Army noted that 2d and 9th Panzer had been located in the US sector, and that 1, 9, 10, and 12 SS Panzer divisions had

> been seen in small packets but there is no reason to suppose that any of these formations is operating or indeed is in condition to operate as a division at this time.[752]

In summarizing enemy strengths and capabilities along the western front, First Allied Airborne's G-2 made the following assessment on 15 September:

> In [the] north, enemy can not be expected to stop [the] Allied drive over Rhine unless reinforcements are made immediately available. Still no evidence that anything except remnants 15 Army is arriving in Holland.[753]

The following day, the FAAA G-2 added the following under "miscellaneous":

> Evidence enemy has increased strength in line Antwerp-Hasselt. It is attributable partly to arrival of parachute troops and partly to reappearance of elements of 15 Army.[754]

The published estimates, however, did not reflect every parcel of intelligence received, nor did they portray the controversy that raged at various command levels.

On 15 September, Williams at 21 Army Group spoke with the Lt. Col. Tony Tasker at

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[751] Ibid., 2-13. Despite the designation of elements of Club Route as Heart or Diamond, the main road has been forever remembered as "Club Route," and its subsidiary generally lost to historians.

[752] RG 24, Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 101, up to 2400hrs. 13 Sep 44, 1.

[753] NARA, RG 331, First Allied Airborne Army G-2 Summary No. 12, 151715 Sep '44, 3.

First Allied Airborne Army concerning the imminent publication of SHAEF's weekly summary, noting that elements of two SS panzer divisions were refitting in the Arnhem area. No firm agreement with SHAEF's assessment was reached, with the Airborne G-2 disbelieving the presence of 10 SS, and Williams accepting that the headquarters or trace elements might be there but the actual force was unsubstantial.[755]

ULTRA had produced a series of clues pointing to the Arnhem area. On 6 September the key indicator was decrypted regarding the refit of 58th Panzer Corps moving to Koblenz, but also ordering II SS Panzer Corps to Army Group B, transfering it to Eindhoven to direct the rest and refit of 2d, 116th, 9th Panzer Divisions, and Heavy Assault Gun Abteilung 217. These divisions as well as 10 SS Panzer were to move to the area Venlo-Arnhem for refit.[756] On 9 September, 9th Panzer was moved to the Aachen-Liege sector to go into German Seventh Army reserve.[757] On 11 September, 10th SS Panzer was located east of Maastricht, according to a division report dated 5 September.[758] The following day, decrypts indicated that the 2d and 116th Panzer Divisions had migrated to the German Seventh Army's front.[759] On 13 September, a decrypt cited orders for Luflotte 3 requesting reconnaissance flights over the Beeringen Bridgehead to ascertain whether the British force staging there would move north, or eastward toward Roermond. Simultaneously,

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[754] Ibid., G-2 Summary No. 13, 16 Sep 44, 3.

[755] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Interview with Brig. E.T. Williams.

[756] Author's possession: Msg XL 9245, 060103Z/9/44; see Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part. 2, 383, fn. 96. This series of message copies from CARL; originals can be found in PRO, DEFE files.

[757] Author's possession: Msg. 090734Z/9/44.

[758] Author's possession, Msgs: 112347Z/9/44 and 121808Z/9/44.

it was asked if it could ascertain whether US forces would move north against Maastricht or east against Aachen.[760]

On 15 September, a message was decrypted stating that a German nightly appreciation on 9 September identified 30 Corps between Antwerp and Hasselt and that a possible additional corps (army) of up to 14 divisions with 800 to 900 tanks was moving forward. The German estimate was that the British intended a thrust on both sides of Eindhoven into Arnhem, so a photo recce was requested. This appreciation also accounted for a possible attempt to encircle German forces in the western Netherlands from the areas of Nijmegen and Wesel.[761] Several days later, a further decrypt clarified that the Germans were concerned about identifying whether the major thrust expected would go to Arnhem or Aachen.[762] The same day, another decrypt revealed that Army Group B Headquarters had moved to Oosterbeek, four kilometers west of Arnhem.[763]

At 1 Airborne Corps, the General Staff Officer 2 (intelligence), Maj. Brian Urquhart, requested photo imagery coverage on 12 September that was returned on the 15th, with a series of low-oblique photos showing

> German tanks and armored vehicles within easy range of the 1 Airborne Division's main dropping zone.

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[759] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, part. 2, 383.

[760] Author's possession, Msg:130241Z/9/44.

[761] Author's possession: Msg: 151612Z/9/44.

[762] Author's possession, Msg; HP 9 131313Z/9/44.

[763] Author's possession, Msg: HP 220, 15 Sep 44; see also Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part. 2, 385, fn. 108.

Already distraught over what he felt was an ill-conceived operation, Urquhart was relieved and placed on medical leave after an impassioned discussion with Browning, who did not act on what he felt was inconclusive.[764]

Beginning 14 September, two telegrams were dispatched to what the resistance referred to as "British Central," the intelligence clearing and decoding organization that operated under MI6. The first telegram was received and decrypted on 15 September, the second a day later. The text of the first said:

> Evaluation B. with following text: SS Hohenstaufl[sic] along Yssel. Units from this division noticed from ARNHEM to ZUPTHEN and along road ZUPTHEN-APELDORN. H.Q. perhaps at EE[F]DE. Field Fortifications are being built along YSSEL.

The second telegram, decrypted on the 16th, stated:

> Eval. B. text: Ref. Telegram of 15th September at Arnhem. Meldekopf. [Kampfgruppen] Hohenstaufl. This is the assembly place of members of the SS Division previously reported. Also at Arnhem Meldekopf [Kampfgruppen] Harzer presumably forming part of a unit situated south of Arnhem.

The second message was garbled in decryption and was corrected verbally by phone with Dutch representatives in London.[765] No record has been found to indicate that either message was forwarded to 21 Army Group.

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[764] Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 72, 73. Urquhart says he was surprised by a comment on the 9th and 10th SS Panzer as refitting in the Arnhem area, a fact he says was confirmed by the Dutch Resistance. This could only have been the 12 September Intelligence Summary, which did not locate them in the Arnhem area; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 147, reports that limited air reconnaissance was flown due to weather and states that "tactical air reconnaissances were carried out over the proposed airborne landing zones but they appeared to have yielded little, if any, useful information about movements of the enemy." Urquhart's "Dutch source," moreover, has not been verified by documents. Moreover, it is uncertain and improbable that 1 Airborne Corps had a Dutch liaison officer during the planning phase who might have passed on the information. No such written intelligence from the Dutch appears in 21 Army Group or 2 Army records.

[765] PRO, CAB 106-1133, Correspondence, Netherlands Military Attache to the Cabinet Office, 30th March 1953.

SHAEF published Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 26 for the week ending 16 September, the day before MARKET GARDEN's scheduled start. Hidden on page 7, the following appreciation was offered:

> First Parachute Army has energetically taken over the ANTWERP-HASSELT Sector from C-in-C NETHERLANDS, but has contributed little more than the glamour of its name, that little being remnants of the two or three parachute divisions.
>
> Seventh Army was late in getting reinforcements but it has now received 9 Panzer Division, to some extent refitted, from the SOUTH, and also one panzer brigade, with probably more infantry to come as the threat to the Fatherland develops in this area. Moreover 2 SS Panzer Division, and perhaps 1 SS Panzer also, have come off comparatively well in the way of tank replacements, though 12 SS Panzer remains very shadowy. *9 SS Panzer Division, and with it presumably 10, has been reported as withdrawing altogether to the Arnhem area of HOLLAND: there they will probably both collect some new tanks from the depot reported in the area of CLEVES.*[766]

The accompanying order-of-battle map marked II SS Panzer Corps as "unlocated," but centered it near Eindhoven. The larger-scale map graphics of the entire front located the corps at the Dutch-German border between Munster and Osnabruck. The assessment for the nominal strength of the 14 Panzer/Panzer Grenadier Divisions in the west was a probable equivalent of five divisions. The 31 infantry divisions located on the front were equated to 21. The four divisions of First Parachute Army facing Second Army were rated as equaling three infantry divisions.[767] Citing enemy losses on all fronts in the west as amounting to about 900,000 men, the G-2 stated flatly that:

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[766] SHAEF Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 26 for the week ending 16 September 1944, 7. Italics are author's.

[767] Ibid., 6.

> No force can, then, be built up in the West sufficient for a counter-offensive or even a successful defensive.[768]

Browning's own instructions, issued on 13 September, were not unrealistic in their assessment of enemy armor in the entire MARKET area and should be seen as the best large-picture estimate available to the divisions that would fight:

> The enemy is fighting determinedly along the general line of ALBERT and ESCAUT canals from inclusive ANTWERP to inclusive MAASTRICHT. His line is held by the remnants of some good divisions, and by new arrivals from HOLLAND. They are fighting well but have few reserves. The total armoured strength is probably not more than 50-100 tanks, mostly Mark IV. There is every sign of the enemy strengthening the defences of the river and canal lines through ARNHEM and NIJMEGEN, especially with flak, but the troops manning them are not numerous and many are of low category. The flak is sited for dual purpose role—both AA and ground.[769]

On the 16 September, Dempsey sent Browning his final instructions, confirming their understanding of the plan and adding, "My very best wishes to you and all your splendid chaps." 30 Corps would begin its advance "seventy minutes after 101 starts to drop."[770]

At 1630 hours on 16 September, the staff weather officer issued his four-day forecast for southern England, the North Sea, and the battle area. Based on adequate conditions predicted, Brereton gave the green light for MARKET.[771]

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[768] Ibid., 8. This is a far cry from the panicked assessment claimed by Cornelius Ryan and others that prompted Strong and Smith to fly to see Montgomery. Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 157-159; Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, 149.

[769] CARL, R-11583, HQ/AIRTPS/TS, 13 Sep 44, Operations Instruction No. 1, 1.

[770] PRO, WO 285-15, Headquarters, Second Army, 16 Sep 44, Ltr. Dempsey to Browning.

[771] PRO, W0 205/623, Headquarters, First Allied Airborne Army, Office of Staff Weather Officer, 16 Sep 44; PRO 205-693, Operation Market Garden, Weather, 1-3. While the weather appeared marginal, it was considered "good for the time of year," with some clouds and morning fog.

MARKET's air program began the night of 16/17 September as 282 bombers from RAF Bomber Command hit flak positions along the northern route along with selected airfields. During the morning of 17 September, 100 RAF bombers struck coastal batteries and shipping near Walcheren, and 852 bombers from Eighth Air Force attacked 112 flak positions along both routes to be used by the troop carriers and glider tows. A total of 1,546 aircraft and 478 gliders comprised the air train that began dropping parachute troops at approximately 1300 hours. Pathfinders had marked selected drop and landing zones shortly before.[772] In 80 minutes' time, a total of 16,500 troops arrived by parachute and a further 13,781 landed by glider in the first lift. Subsequently, 3,690 more parachuted into the battle area and a further 905 flew in by airplane, making a total of 34,876 troops delivered by air.[773]

The air landings achieved complete tactical surprise. Transports and men suffered few losses en route to the battle area. As Browning had stated, the operation would have to succeed, "bottom to top," making the early seizure of the 101st Airborne Division's objectives essential to 30 Corps' rapid movement. (See figure 49.) Assault teams from the 506th Parachute Infantry on DZ "B" left without waiting for unit assembly to move toward the Zon bridge and two smaller bridges, an estimated 2.5 miles away. Scattered enemy resistance was met. Arriving to within 100 yards of the bridge almost three hours after the drop, the assault team watched the Germans destroy the bridge by demolition. Some troops swam the canal, and the

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[772] Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Vol. III, *Europe: ARGUMENT to VE-Day, January 1944 to May 1945* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1988), 603-604; *RAF Narrative, IV*, 145-150.

[773] CARL, N-5787-1, Hqs. First Allied Airborne Army: Allied Airborne Operations In Holland September-October 1944, 2.

entire 506th Regiment held a 2,000-yard-deep bridgehead south of the canal by midnight.

The 502d Parachute Infantry on DZ "C" took two hours to assemble before marching on St. Oderode and seized the bridge over the Dommel after a skirmish. One company sent to the Best bridge was driven off by counterattack after initially capturing the bridge.

Landing on DZ "A" and on an unplanned area to the north, the 501st Parachute Infantry seized the two highway bridges and two rail bridges spanning the Aa River and the Willems Vaart Canal. While some resistance was met, all objectives and the town of Vechel were captured.[774]

The 82d Airborne Division began its drop at 1305 and completed dropping its regiments by 1328. (See figure 50.) The 505th Parachute Infantry made a compact drop landing on DZ "N." It was tasked to seize the town of Groesbeek and the key ridge dominating the division area, as well as to block the approaches to the south and east of the division. The 508th Parachute Infantry, tasked to send a battalion to the Nijmegen bridge and to protect the western flank of the division, failed in their bridge mission. The 504th Parachute Infantry, landing on DZ "O," fanned out to seize bridges over the Maas Waal Canal at Heuman (bridge 7) and Blankenberg (bridge 8.) One company was dropped east of the river and seized the key Grave bridge. The bridges

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[774] 101st Airborne Market, Annex No. 4; Tactical Operations of the Division, 1.

at Hattert (bridge 9) and Honinghute (bridge 10) were also the objectives of assault detachments. Only bridge 7 over the canal was captured intact.[775]

1 Airborne Division's assault, led by 1 Airlanding Brigade, began with the release of 153 Horsa gliders to arrive on LZ "S" beginning at 1300 hours. (See figure 51.) These were followed by 154 Horsa and 13 Hamilcar gliders landing on LZ "Z." 1 Parachute Brigade began dropping on DZ "X' at 1355 hours. Consolidating their landings, the bulk of the divisional recce squadron and the three parachute battalions began moving on separate routes to the Arnhem bridge, their plan being to have 2 Parachute Battalion capture the bridge while the 3 Parachute Battalion assisted from a northerly axis. 2 Para was also to capture the rail bridge and pontoon bridge, if possible, along the way. 1 Parachute Battalion was to hold the high ground just north of Arnhem.[776] Landing next to an SS training battalion, two of the battalions and part of the recce squadron were embroiled in a series of ambushes, with only one parachute battalion, a troop of antitank guns, engineers, signals, and the brigade headquarters detachment eventually reaching the north end of the Arnhem road bridge. The Germans destroyed the pontoon bridge and the rail bridge.[777]

The II SS Panzer Corps, noted to be refitting in the Arnhem area, had the remnants of two formations, 9 SS "Hohenstaufen" and 10 SS "Frundsberg." (See figure 52.) Both were no more than brigade group strength, about 3,000–3,500 men but with about an equal number of men available in combat service support elements.

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[775] NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 12344, Opn Market-82d Abn Div Narrative, 1944, 1-3. It should be noted that the "coup de main" drop zone for the Grave bridge was not approved during the planning phase by IX Troop Carrier Command. It was "coordinated" between the transport pilots and the regimental commander just prior to the actual drop.

[776] 1 Airborne Division Report, Annexure 'N', "Story of the 1 Parachute Brigade," 1.

Hohenstaufen was then bereft of tanks and, Frundsberg's strength eventually rose to about 50 tanks. Both received orders quickly for immediate action, with 9 SS to remain and defend Arnhem, and 10 SS to move southwards, occupy the Nijmegen road and rail bridges, and defend the town. With no coup-de-main force holding and blocking the bridges, this action negated the surprise achieved by the initial parachute drops and ensured Nijmegen's reinforcement from the north while splitting the Allies by occupying the "island" between Nijmegen and Arnhem.[778]

Initially, both the 101st and 82d met scattered resistance and, at least temporarily, had numerical superiority in each of their sectors. Critical to their survival would be the rapid penetration of the "crust" separating them from 30 Corps and the transit of Guards Armoured Division. In each sector, a major water obstacle blocked movement. The Zon bridge was gone, and the alternative bridge over the canal at Best was in enemy hands. The Nijmegen bridges were in enemy hands. The Arnhem bridge was blocked from the south. Dempsey had believed that reaching Arnhem would be an operation ranging from two to five days, but everything had been predicated on complete "carpets" south of Nijmegen to Eindhoven and the

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[777] Ibid.; Frost, *A Drop Too Many*, Chapter 15.

[778] Wilhelm Tieke, *In the Firestorm of the Last Years of the War: II. SS-Panzerkorps with the 9. and 10. SS-Divisions "Hohenstaufen" and "Frundsberg"* (Winnipeg: J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1999), 222-233; Robert J. Kershaw, *"It Never Snows in September": The German View of MARKET-GARDEN and the Battle of Arnhem, September 1944* (Surrey: Ian Allen, 1994), 321-322, 326-327; J. Dugdale, *Panzer Divisions, PanzerGrenadier Divisions, Panzer Brigades of the Army and Waffen SS in the West, Autumn 1944-February 1945. ARDENNES and NORDWIND. Their Detailed and Precise Strengths and Organisations, Volume I [Part I] September 1944 Refitting and Re-equipment* (London: Galago Publishing, 2000), 77-93; Marcel Zwarts, *German Armored Units at Arnhem, September 1944* (Hong Kong: Concord Publications Co., 2001), passim. Assessing German strength is difficult because of the constant reinforcement given to the major formations during the battle. Kershaw attempts to provide a daily order of battle with strengths approximated. Zwarts offers several "snapshots" but does explain the differences in combat and support strengths. The issue of numbers reinforces General Hackett's comments concerning building combat capabilities. (See fn 787.)

simultaneous taking of the major bridges.[779] The airmen and the American division commanders had negated this plan; the replacement concept of "moving to the objectives" from a tight airhead was too slow for the task.

Horrocks announced his attack time upon notification of 1 Airborne Corps' takeoff. Zero hour was designated at 1435 following preparatory fires begining at 1400. 30 Corps "rolled up" behind a 350-gun moving barrage centering on Club Route, with 5 (Guards) Armoured Brigade leading the division. Guards Armoured planned its advance in two phases. Phase one would be the initial advance and capture of Valkenswaard. Two battalions supplied by the 50 (N) division would cover the flanks of the advance. The division expected to concentrate south of Eindhoven until ordered to "bound" forward through the 101st Airborne. Phase II would constitute the advance toward the final objective with two brigades "up" beginning at first light on D+1.[780] With nightfall at 1847 and total darkness at 2005, the division intended to halt for the first night.

Once past the last fall of artillery shot, Guards Armoured rapidly met resistance, losing nine tanks quickly in ambush. While rocket-firing Typhoon aircraft flying in a "cab rank" of continuous flights to support the armor, did much to advance the column, Valkenswaard, where Adair had planned to harbor his lead units until daylight, was not reached until dark. The following day Guards Armoured pressed

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[779] Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 4; FAAA, *Airborne Operations in Holland, 1*; Major General Sir Allan Adair, *A Guards' General: The Memoirs of Major General Sir Allan Adair* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), 162-164. The FAAA Report notes that Dempsey expected to reach the Zuider Zee in 2-5 days, and to link with 1 Airborne Division between D+1 and D+3.

[780] CARL, R-13333, 21 Army Group Operation "MARKET GARDEN" 17-26 Sept 1944 [hereafter referred to as *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*]; Appendix L to part II, Extracts from Guards Armoured Div O.O. No. 12, 15 Sep 44, 93-95; Section 8: 30 Corps Operations 17 September, 37-39;

toward Eindhoven, where it linked with the airborne at 1700 hours. One brigade had unsuccessfully attempted to bypass Eindhoven, and the airborne, failing to gain a bridge at Zon, had attacked again at Best, where the bridge was finally destroyed by the Germans. A new bridge was rapidly built at Zon during the night, and tanks rolled forward on it at first light, 0615, on 19 September.[781]

Guards Armoured had been opposed by "the Regiment von Hoffman." The 101st had correctly identified one kampfgruppe from the 10 SS Panzer that had been attached to the First Parachute Army and provided its only real armor support with 15 Mk IV selfpropelled panzerjaeger antitank guns, a motorized battery of field guns, and a collection of "regiments." Along the road, the Germans established a series of "blocks" in depth; Valkenswaard had been the second. Two others awaited on 18 September, one in Aalst and another at Eindhoven, both delaying Guards Armoured from reaching the 101st. The necessity to build a bridge at Zon negated the "second bound" plan, which had been meant to take them through to the Nijmegen bridge and beyond.[782]

The second day's thrust by 30 Corps was threatened by moves not yet seen. The road running northwest from Eindhoven to Utrecht, west of Arnhem, marked the sectors of three "divisions," really brigade-size kampfgruppen, running from south to north, the 85th, 245th, and 59th. Student deployed the 59th against the 101st's western

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PRO WO 171/605, War Diary 5th Armoured Brigade, Guards Armoured Division, Sep 17th. Brigadier Gwatkin credits "Typhoons" with "wonderful assistance."

[781] *Second Army History*, 220-221.

[782] Kershaw, *It Never Snows*, situation map facing 192; chapters, 2, 3, and 7.

and northwestern flanks, holding Best and threatening the division's drop zones. The 85th and 245th lay in Ritchie's path.

GARDEN's flank corps were meant to draw off enemy reserves from attacking Club Route. (See figure 53.) O'Connor's 8 Corps launched a night crossing of the Escaut canal east of 30 Corps' boundary to pass 3 Division, whose task was to extend to the northeast, reaching a depth of approximately 10 miles. O' Connor intended, at that point, to launch 11 Armoured Division to the area east of Eindhoven bordered by Deurne-Helmond. Besides broadening the base of Dempsey's attack, 8 Corps would move on order to the Maas, covering 30 Corps. Commencing at midnight on 18 September, 3 Division (which had motor-marched 300 miles from France on 17 September) launched its attack less than 18 hours after arriving in sector. At the same time, 50 (N) Division was transferred to 8 Corps, to continue developing security in depth for Horrocks' attack, but now under O'Connor's supervision. 11 Armoured passed through the bridgehead by noon on 19 September, with recce moving toward the objective area.[783]

Lt. Gen. N.E. Ritchie's 12 Corps was to widen the attack approximately 15 miles to the west, launching a night crossing of the Escaut Canal by 53 (W) Division at Lommel during the night of 17 September to protect 30 Corps' flank and to prevent the enemy from attempting a breakout eastward toward Germany. (See figure 54.) The 15 (H) Division was to expand the Gheel bridgehead, and Ritchie was to pass 7 Armoured Division on order to seize the area bordered by Boxtel, Hertogenbosch, and

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[783] *Second Army History*, 244-246.

Tilburg. 12 Corps met considerable opposition, and by the end of 19 September. no progress was made toward contacting the 101st southwest flank.[784]

Montgomery knew by nightfall on 17 September that his plan for seizing the bridges had only partially succeeded, but considering the expected growing opposition, he felt that "we had made a very good beginning" Dempsey believed that the airborne operation was developing satisfactorily, as had Guards Armoured's attack He met with the three corps commanders on the morning of 18 September to arrange for O'Connor's takeover of 30 Corps' rear areas. Dempsey's intelligence called the current operation "a parallel-in-reverse" of the 1940 aerial invasion of Holland, hinting that signals intelligence had received a plethora of information from the no-longer-security-conscious enemy reporting the airborne drops. Intelligence further noted elements of the 9 SS and 10 SS Panzer Divisions as "new in the canal area," and noted:

> There are reported to be two battle groups, each of roughly a battalion strength, under the command of another battle group carrying the title 10 SS Div FRUNDSBERG. They are unlikely to have any heavy tanks with them, certainly no appreciable number.[785]

Dempsey's G-2 further assessed that the bulk of the replacements of quality had gone to meet Patton's thrust, and secondarily to the Aachen sector during the previous fortnight. Noting that parrying the Holland thrust by Second Army would require risk in other sectors, he stated:

> [I]t is considered unlikely that any large scale reinforcements can be made available, and the battle now joined will be fought out by the

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[784] Ibid., 240-242.

[785] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 105, up to 2400 hrs. 17 Sep 44, 1.

troops on the ground, with the uncertain addition of some troops south of the River Scheldt. They will not amount to much.[786]

That "uncertain addition," the unknown factor, had been the crux of the intelligence problem in predicting German capabilities. A new pattern of German replacement, reinforcement, rehabilitation, and almost "spontaneous regeneration" of combat power would emerge to tip the scales significantly. Intelligence had for weeks located headquarters and enumerated rapidly growing numbers of stragglers pouring into Germany. That these could be made into combat-effective formations in a matter of weeks or sometimes days, challenged the entire belief system of the Allied generals. These "new" units now began to appear throughout Holland and indeed the entire Western Front.[787]

While Dempsey noted, consistently, "dull, rain" in his daily diary, the weather had more ominous meaning for MARKET. Brereton had delayed the morning operation on D+1 due to predicted fog, rescheduling air operations to arrive over Holland in mid-afternoon. This lift, comprising 1,360 troop carriers and 1,203 gliders, brought in the glider support units for the 101st, the glider regiment of the 82d, the 4 Parachute Brigade, and the remainder of the Airlanding Brigade for 1 Airborne.

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[786] Ibid., 2.

[787] In his interview with the author at Fort Leavenworth, Sir John Hackett described the remarkable efficiency of the German soldier. He noted that given a large body of German stragglers inserted below a headquarters element, these troops could begin to function like a trained unit in a short amount of time. While obviously not equal to picked, highly trained troops, they fought extremely well and aggressively. One comment that was telling was, "You have never fought in a [real] war, until you have fought Germans." It was the disbelief of professionals in both the American and British Army, that units could literally be "reborn" so rapidly after battle that made their estimates of German strength and capabilities so erroneous. The fact that some German units had members drawn from the shells of as many several dozen formations also perplexed G-2s who tracked prisoners from these new kampfgruppen by their paybooks. The reality they refused to accept was that many times the Allies were meeting not "stragglers" but new rehabilitated units.

Supplies were also dropped.[788] While the delay proved indecisive to either the 101st or the 82d, it severely hampered the now encircled 1 Airborne Division and slowed its move toward Arnhem while the enemy simultaneously massed against it. Additionally, Brereton's decision stopped 83 Group from flying close support, the decision having been made to keep only one air mission, resupply or tactical, aloft at one time. While the transports waited for the fog to lift, the tactical air forces on the continent found themselves grounded by orders.[789]

Moreover, communications between the air missions proved disastrous. Air requests from the MARKET area were sent via London to 2 TAF in Brussels and then on to 83 Group; there apparently was no direct link. The impending breakup of AEAF, the move forward of the Air C-in-C, Leigh Mallory, to Granville to be near Eisenhower, the lack of interest of the Deputy Supreme Commander, Tedder, in the largest airborne operation in history, and the remarkably poor communications that plagued Second Army's air links, seemed to divorce the "air weapon" of the Tactical Air Forces from the ground battle. First Allied Airborne Army gave the air delivery

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[788] FAAA, *Allied Airborne Operations in Holland*, 8; Warren, *Airborne Operations, European Theater*, 117-118;

[789] *RAF Narrative, IV*, 151; PRO W0 171/208, Second Army "G" Ops-Opns Log, Second Army Air Support Notes No. 85, 85, 87, Sept 17-19; PRO CAB 101/316, Air Operations Allied Expeditionary Air Forces, 17th-30 September 1944/including Close Air Support to 30 Corps; Second Army notes of sorties for the first three days are: 230 in support of 2 Army and 86 as armed recce; on 18 September, 173 of 263 flown were over MARKET area; 73 sorties were flown but results were nil due to weather. Only two armed recce missions were flown north of Arnhem. The air support for MARKET GARDEN was poorly coordinated by the numerous airmen involved. Brereton's insistence on being the "air space manager" [in modern terms] often left the GARDEN forces and indeed the MARKET forces without close air support. Brereton insisted that no tactical missions could be flown while air transports were in the sky—essentially eliminating many of the benefits of air superiority over the battlefield. Apparently, changes in air rescheduling were sent to 2 TAF without time to react, even when decisions were made the evening before by Brereton. 83 Group flew 550 sorties on D-Day [see Chapter 11 for discussion].

role top priority; they saw little immediacy in the problems of the GARDEN force in competition with their own transport schedule.[790]

Indeed, the airborne's ground battle began changing rapidly, and air support would have been welcome. The 101st cleared Eindhoven of a battalion of Germans by noon on D+1, reaching the group of bridges south of the town. A link with Guards Armoured was made before dark, and a bailey bridge built during the night to replace the blown structure. Passing the division forward, Guards Armoured reached Grave, 30 miles away, by 0820. (See figure 55.) Damage to bridge 10 (Hotinghue) caused Club Route to be directed via the Heuman Bridge, bridge 7, then via Groesbeek to Nijmegen. The Nijmegen bridge had not been captured, and Browning, Adair, and Gavin met at noon to coordinate a combined attack to clear Nijmegen and seize the bridge over the Waal. While the corridor from Zon to Grave remained clear, enemy activity on both the 101st northwest flank and the 82d east flank portended the grave operational problem now facing MARKET GARDEN.

The presence of Model at Army Group B, Student at First Parachute Army, and Bittrich at II SS Panzer Corps provided a clear, concerted view and plan for how to squeeze, cut off, and eradicate both the airborne and ground elements piecemeal. These actions, though put in train early in the operation (in late afternoon on the 17th) were clear by 19 September. While probably benefitting from the capture of a complete MARKET plan from a downed US glider during the first lift—presented to

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[790] CAB 101/332, Notes for Air Chief Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane from Air Chief Marshal Sir Harry Broadhurst on the Tactical Air Force Operations in Normandy, 3, 4; Coningham, *Operations of Second Tactical Air Force*, 28; Leigh Mallory, *Despatch*, 77-79; Charles Carrington, *Soldier at Bomber Command* (London: Leo Cooper, 1987), 177-181.

Student within hours of the landing—the German response was more than likely the doctrinal response of three like-thinking, seasoned, combat commanders.[791]

As Guards Armoured linked with Gavin's men on the road between Grave and Heuman, regiments from the 59th Division pressed the 101st at Best, at the Zonche forest, and along the Zuid Willems Canal between Schindel and Veghel. East of Grosbeek, elements of the 406th Division coming from the Reichswald Forest pressed the Groesbeek Ridge and drop-zone areas, as well as attacking from the southeast at Mook. Meanwhile, reinforcements from 10 SS "Frundsberg" rafted across the river to bypass Lt. Col. John Frost's block at Arnhem, and then proceeded south across the Nijmegen Bridge to reinforce the town.[792]

While GARDEN had the benefit of two corps beginning their attacks to provide the threat to the enemy's south flank—and neither the 101st nor the 82d were in danger of being overrun as British armored regiments soon were to be attached to each to bolster their threatened flanks—1 Airborne was effectively boxed and the element at the Arnhem bridge isolated from any relief by the division. Building on the effective temporary block laid by SS Battalion Kraft near Wolfheze, 9 SS

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[791] NARA, RG 319, "R-Manuscripts," MS R-5, Lucian Hechler, *Invasion from the Sky*, Research Section, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953, 27-42; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, 141-143. The "R" Series were research studies of the campaign using German documents to supplement the research and narratives of the US Official Historians.

[792] Kershaw, *It Never Snows*, Situation map: Situation within the Airborne Corridor 18-19 September 1944, VIII, IX, X, passim; Warren, *Airborne Operations, European Theater*, 130; *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, 44-47; FAAA, *Allied Airborne Operations in Holland*, 9-11. Gavin indicated to the author that he had worried about armor in the Reichswald forest and had sent patrols looking for it. His G-3, Major (later Lt. Gen.) John Norton, told the author during an interview that Browning, who spent most of his time at the 82d command post, was likewise concerned about the division's east (right) flank, and had cautioned Gavin not to press the attack in Nijmegen on the 18th at the expense of losing the high ground. This, of course, was reversed when Guards Armoured arrived. Both men were reacting to unconfirmed "reports" of a tank depot in the vicinity of Cleve. Browning had told Gavin on the evening of the 18th that Nijmegen bridge should be taken by dark on the 19th or latest early on the 20th. This was based on Guards Armoured arriving on the 19th.

Hohenstaufen had effectively built a "sperrlinie" (literally, obstacle line). which had held 1 Parachute Brigade at Arnhem's town limits. (See figure 56.) Meanwhile, another ersatz division of kampfgruppen, Division von Tettau, formed west of 1 Airborne's drop zones. At the time of the second lift on 18 September, they had begun to move eastward across Drop Zone "Y," while additional kampfgruppen to the south compressed the 1 Airborne area both from the river and off the original drop zones. While 4 Parachute Brigade's drop had been taken under fire, many of the Dutch SS were routed by Hackett's troops, and the Von Tettau attack was halted until 19 September.[793]

This did not alleviate 1 Airborne's peril. While the division commander was temporarily isolated during 1 Parachute Brigade's unsuccessful attempt to enter Arnhem, the arrival of Hackett's brigade did not signal a needed fresh estimate of the airborne's mission. Believing the full three brigades could still move to the river, the division's acting commander moved Hackett's brigade toward its original objectives north of Arnhem, while the Airlanding Brigade attempted to hold back Von Tettau while somehow reinforcing 1 Parachute Brigade's move to the bridge. Failing immediately, this resulted in the compression of 1 Airborne Division into a "kessel" (cauldron or pocket) centering on Osterbeek, with 1 Airborne's new headquarters sited a few minutes' walk from where Model had been ousted on 17 September when the parachute drops began. Returning to his division, Urquhart found two disastrous occurrences had happened. First, the high ground of Westerbouwing had not been held as "vital ground" due to the intended move of the division eastward, and second, the

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[793] Kershaw, *It Never Snows*, Situation maps, Formation of Kampfgruppe von Tettau, and Arrival of

ferry at Heavedorp, below Westerbouwing, had drifted away. Both the division and 2 Para were now isolated, both from each other and from any help coming from south of the Neder Rijn.[794]

Weather continued to plague MARKET, as did routing shifts. Brereton had compressed his air missions into a single stream, following the northern route on D+1 due to enemy action, and now shifted all missions to the southern route on D+2 for similar reasons. While this caused planning confusion, it also lengthened the arrival times—times that were also later in the day. Both lifts arrived too late to be committed to battle on arrival day. Weather, however, cancelled many air missions, with only half for the 101st being flown, most of the 82d's being canceled, and some gliders of the Polish Brigade arriving north of the river with heavy losses on arrival in the ongoing battle. Two of the cancellations were noteworthy: The 82d was to receive a second glider battalion on 19 September, and the Polish Airborne Brigade was planned to land on Drop Zone "K" south of Arnhem bridge. Given the critical shortage of infantry at Nijmegen and the disastrous isolation of 2 Para at Arnhem, the now teetering tactical situation north of the Neder Rijn was not to receive even the problematic "help" of these two landings.[795]

Second Lift at Ginkel Heath.

[794] Interview with Sir John Hackett, 1983. Hackett noted that Urquhart's absence was critical in that the importance of Westerbouwing "would never" have escaped Urquhart. In retrospect, Hackett felt the failure to retain this ground doomed the division, though it was not apparent to him or the other brigadiers at the time. The original plan did make provision to secure ferries and barges. The daily situation overlays reproduced from the 1 Airborne Report in Urquhart's book show the compression of the division into a perimeter from its attack stance. See Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 44, 78, 94, 102, 118.

[795] Warren, *Airborne Operations, European Theater*, 127-133. Warren notes that the original drop planned for the Polish brigade would have arrived at 1000 hours, several hours before German armor began reducing Frost's positions north of the bridge. However, dropping the Poles on the original Drop Zone "K" might have led to the slaughter of the paras, as the southern end of the bridge was held by elements of 10 SS.

Dempsey and Montgomery met on 19 Septenber to discuss the operational situation, but Montgomery was trying to manage multiple problems—dealing with Crerar by phone in an attempt to speed up the ongoing attack on Boulogne and to develop a thrust to open Antwerp, and communicating with Eisenhower, who now suddenly wrote asking for Monty's views on future operations.[796] Still, throughout their meeting, neither Monty nor Dempsey predicted disaster. The Nijmegen bridge, not taken by 19 September, was the key to both 1 Airborne's survival and the viability of the original plan. Dempsey's flank corps were slowly developing momentum. Williams, at 21 Army Group, repeated his theme that preventing Allied use of Antwerp was the Germans' most effective defense for the homeland, but Montgomery's G-2 offered little on the developing tactical situation. He did note:

> Hohenstaufen division is located along the Yssel, with units from Arnhem to Zupthen, and along the road Zutphen-Apeldorn and Hq. Possibly at Eede. 9SS Division has been missing for some time. A mixed battle group Frundsberg of 9 and 10 SS was identified yesterday South of Eindhoven: so there may be some truth in this report; but the division cannot be in a very formidable state.[797]

Dempsey's intelligence section did not add gloom, stating in their 18 September report:

> There is no reason to suppose that he [the enemy] has anything worse in store for us than we have met so far, and nothing of divisional size is likely to appear just yet.[798]

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[796] *Montgomery Log*, 19 September. Eisenhower's comments will be covered in Chapter 10.

[797] 21 Army Group Intelligence Review No. 160, 18 Sep 44, 2. This array was generally accurate prior to 17 September; since the airborne drop 9 SS had formed to fight 1 Airborne; Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, does not discuss this intelligence as it underscores that the first actual usable dispositions produced by ULTRA were after the operation began, and in fact, were not accurate on the day delivered. Had they been delivered in this detail two days before, no one could have ignored them.

[798] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 106, up to 2400 hrs. 18 Sep 44, 2. Noteworthy is the assessment in Order of Battle locations of the 9 SS and 10 SS listed as battalion strength, 11.

The following day's appreciation began almost as a cheer:

> Right, left and centre the enemy has had the worst of the day, and on all sectors of [the] Second Army front there are successes to record.[799]

While casually mentioning that the Arnhem bridge could "not be held," the assessment of the corridor leading from the original bridgehead to Nijmegen was remarkably sanguine, noting that though the enemy no doubt would try to break the link, the effort to mount a large counterattack had been spent instead to keep the airborne groups separated. Citing the presence of the boundaries between the First Parachute Army and C-in-C Netherlands, the G-2 wrongly assessed that it would be difficult to coordinate battle arrangements.[800]

As this summary was being distributed, the situation belied its content. From the German perspective, three Schwerpunkt existed: one north of the Neder Rijn at the Osterbeek Perimeter; one at Nijmegen, where the defense of the Nijmegen bridge and the blocking of the road north was critical; and one south of the Waal, which might be seen as the entire length of 30 Corps' corridor northward. Major efforts were mounted against the Allies in all three sectors.

On 19 and 20 September, the 107th Panzer Brigade at Zon and elements of II Falschirmjaeger Corps, based at Cleve, launched attacks. Coming out of the east with a tank raid, the enemy was driven off at dark on the 19th at Zon. This early raid was developed into a larger attack at the same spot at dawn on 20 September, when the 107th reappeared to attack and temporarily control by fire the area around the Zon bailey bridge. The 107th was driven off by tanks from Guards Armoured Division; this

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[799] Second Army Intelligence Summary No. 107, up to 2400 hrs. 19 Sep 44, 1.

posed the only southern threat to the corridor on the 20th. II Falschirmjaeger Corps planned a three-pronged attack at dawn, but the attack started in late morning. While the two northern attacks see-sawed, the southern thrust; which took Mook temporarily, reached within two kilometers of the Heuman bridge before being driven off in the afternoon by airborne infantry and Guards Armoured tanks.[801] Guards Armoured Division, by this time, had been segmented to bolster "Club Route" in the airborne sectors, now about to be renamed "Hell's Highway" by the paratroops. The 15/19 Hussars were attached to the 101st, the first of a series of detachments that would stretch Adair's division over two-thirds the length of Club Route while diminishing its own strength to push forward. The Coldstream Group would soon be linked with the 82d to defend its eastern flank from armored incursion and to form an armored reserve in the center of Club Route.[802]

The hasty attack proposed against the railroad and road bridges by Gavin for 19 September failed, as three columns of paratroops and tanks moved on both bridges and toward the post office allegedly holding the demolition controls for the main bridge. Neither bridge column succeeded, though the paratroops reached the post office and found nothing there. Another attack was planned for 20 September.

The combined attack by the Guards Armoured Division and the 82d Airborne on the Nijmegen bridge was a two-part assault involving a tank-infantry attack on the bridge from the south and a river assault crossing designed both to flank the enemy

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[800] Ibid., 2.

[801] Kershaw, *It Never Snows*, Situation map, The Situation on Hell's Highway, 20-26 September, 145-147; 190-192.

and seize the northern approaches to the bridge. (See figure 57.) Two kampfgruppen held the twin bridges: a rail bridge in the west, backed on the north shore by additional troops in the fort near Lent, and the road bridge outposted by defenses at the outlying traffic circles. Both bridges were set for demolition. The attack plan agreed upon by Adair, Browning, Gavin, and Horrocks was a stronger version of the plan used on 19 September. One column would attack the rail bridge, essentially to cover the rear of the second column attempting to clear Hunner Park and the Valkof, west of the road bridge, while a third column worked from the east toward the traffic circle and approaches to the road bridge. Each column was a mix of Guards tanks and American paratroopers. Simultaneously, part of a battalion would cross the river under the fire support of tanks, to seize the north shore and flank the north end of the bridge from the west. Each group would be exposed, the men in the river crossing the worst; the entire attack relied upon pressure built on the defense from every quarter and incredible bravery on the part of every man taking part.[803]

While the bridge attack was being prepared, 1 Airborne received a radio message at 0140 hours from 1 Airborne Corps (Rear) requesting the designation of a new drop zone for the Polish brigade. New coordinates were flashed to the rear designating a drop zone near the town of Driel, across from the Heavedorp ferry and

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[802] FAAA, *Allied Airborne Operations*, 9; Verney, *The Guards Armoured Division*, 112. In addition to the 15/19 Hussars, the 44 Royal Tank Regiment, two squadrons of the Royals, and two batteries of artillery were attached to the 101st by Second Army.

[803] Adair, *A Guards' General*, 165-167; Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin, *On to Berlin: Battles of an Airborne Commander, 1943–1946* (New York: Viking Press, 1978) 169-175, 178-181; *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, Section 8, Operations of 30 Corps, 48-51; *A Short History of 30 Corps*, 33-35, Map 19; Captain Nigel Nicholson and Patrick Forbes, *History of the Grenadier Guards in the War of 1939-1945* [hereafter referred to as Nicholson and Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards*], I (n.p., n.d.), 129-140; *82d Division Narrative*, Opn Market; section "Crossing the Waal River," 1-20. This section, based on field interviews, indicates that the battalion picked for crossing, 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, had no previous knowledge, plan, or preparation for the river crossing.

closer to the perimeter. 1 Airborne Corps had known from a message on 19 September that the south end of the bridge was held by the Germans, thus threatening the Polish drop. Sosabowski hastily planned and briefed his commanders, though weather would intervene to prevent the planned drop that morning. The fight in Nijmegen, however, intensified.[804]

While fighting increased on the 82d's east flank, the attack toward the bridge began at first light with house-to-house fighting, as direct assaults proved suicidal. By mid-afternoon, Hunner Park and the Valkof were cleared, and the Americans began their river crossing under withering fire, eventually establishing a shallow perimeter on the dike overlooking the river. The first tank assault by the Grenadier Guards was driven off, but a second, beginning about 1800 hours, was made when the Americans were seen moving toward the bridge from the west. This assault crossed the bridge under fire and linked with the American paratroopers. A shallow bridgehead, about a mile deep, was established as darkness fell, and clearing the bridge area of snipers and demolitions proceeded.[805] At dark, the situation at the Arnhem bridge was critical.

Dempsey's major concerns went beyond relieving 1 Airborne Division. The landing of the airborne had given him command of the three airborne divisions, but his entire responsibility lay with impelling success within all four corps involved. Montgomery, who had no further reserves to commit, was forced to accept the role of bystander; it was, after all, an army-level battle. From this perspective, the operation

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[804] First Airborne Report, Annexure "M," War Diary, Sheet 5, entry, 20 Sep 0140; it is unclear when 1 Airborne Corps received the original message; Golden, *Echoes from Arnhem*, 164, 165; George F. Cholewcynski, *Poles Apart: The Polish Airborne at the Battle of Arnhem* (New York: Sarpedon, 1993), 118-119; Sosabowski, *Freely I Served*, 156-158.

teetered. O'Connor's 8 Corps was just coming into action, with 3 Division widening its bridgehead on the Escaut, 11 Armoured moving on Heeze, and 50 Division clearing pockets of resistance behind Club Route. Ritchie's 12 Corps met firm resistance. 53 Division had crossed but two brigades in its sector, and the Highlanders of 15 Division were blocked by a strong enemy defense. The crisis for GARDEN, however, was along Club Route. Dempsey's only solution for the southern end of Club Route was to transfer the 101st Division to Ritchie's control, now making the south end of the route an affair to be guarded by both Ritchie on the west and O'Connor on the east. Dempsey went forward on 21 September, meeting with Browning, Horrocks, and later Ritchie.[806]

Horrocks received little help from the slow movement on his flanks, and each of the two "airborne carpets" was pressed from the flanks. The 101st, already drawing forces from Horrocks' "linking force," Guards Armoured, was pressed from both flanks, by both a brigade of armor and a division kampfgruppen. Likewise, the 82d, now straddling the Waal with two bridges in hand, were also pressed from the eastern flank by a division kampfgruppen. Ahead of Horrocks, lay a building force on the "island," the patch of land between the Nijmegen Bridge and the troops clinging to the end of the Arnhem bridge, 11 miles away. While virtually penned in by these forces along nearly 50 miles of road, each sector was in crisis, with the southern-most already penetrated and the road cut at St. Oderode. This momentary cut would soon turn into a running battle along the road from Veghel to Uden. From an operational

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[805] Nicholson and Forbes, *The Grenadier Guards*, 134-140; 82d Narrative, "Crossing the Waal," passim.

[806] *Dempsey Diary*, 20 September.

perspective, while the relief of 1 Airborne and a bridgehead on the Neder Rijn were critical, tactical loss in the 82d area, or more important, on Hell's Highway in the 101st area, could cause the destruction of the entire corps. In good weather, airpower might have been decisive. Between 20 September and the end of the battle, weather, and Brereton's restrictions, hampered the only "hammer" that Dempsey might have used.[807]

At Brereton's headquarters, Brereton and his staff viewed the operation in terms of air transport missions. Brereton had overflown the drop on D-Day in a B-17 with Matthew Ridgway, and a wireless link was established with 1 Airborne Headquarters by 1700. Ridgway was told the next day that upon the fly-in of 52 Division, XVIII Corps would assume command of the two US airborne divisions and Browning would take command of 1 Airborne, 52 (L), and the Polish Brigade. Parks, who initiated this idea, immediately received approval from Brereton. While Brereton made weather and route changes, he also informed Ridgway that he would prepare his corps for another drop after 1 October, "regardless of whether we have received replacements of men and material." While Brereton and Ridgway visited 2 Army on the continent on 20 and 21 September, the only additional aid offered to 1 Airborne Corps by the headquarters was to fly in two battalions of the 52 Division in gliders intended for the airborne engineers.[808]

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[807] *Second Army History*, 229-233; NARA, RG 407, ML-931, Positions and Activities of 8 and 12 Corps during Market Garden; *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, 48-52; Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, 117, 118.

[808] *Parks Diary*, 17-21 September. Of some interest should be the fact that Browning did not know his headquarters would be downgraded and an additional corps headquarters flown in with the 52 (Lowland) Division. Browning turned down the offer of the two battalions of the 52 (Lowland) Division, though it had never been made clear to him how much of the division would be sent.

Brereton's information at Sunninghill Park revolved around the air situation. His own G-2 did not identify elements of the 9 SS and 10 SS Panzers as engaged until their 19 September report, and the same day reported:

> I PARA ARMY front pierced by Allied thrust into EINDHOVEN. Light opposition offered against Allied airborne landing.[809]

While Brereton had boasted to Eisenhower, while still commander of Ninth Air Force, that he could control the air support that would make an airhead unassailable, he did not use his own authority or, more important, fly to see Coningham, who still smarted from not having the final say over air support. Leigh Mallory and the moribund Headquarters, AEAF remained even farther in the shadows. As 30 Corps waited for dawn on 21 September, the question no doubt in every mind from the Waal to the perimeter north of the Neder Rijn was would help come from the air?

Gavin's men were incensed that Guards Armoured had not gone forward during the night. Yet those on the dikes north of the Waal knew nothing of what transpired south of them. Nijmegen had yet to be cleared, and the corps commander had ordered forward 43 (Wessex) Division to clear the island. The carpet had run out. Horrocks saw a battle ahead though he still pushed the point element of Guards Armoured forward on 21 September to maintain pressure. The night had granted cover for the Germans to move up additional forces to block the road. By dawn, there were fewer than 150 men fit to fight at the Arnhem bridge; by 0900 these remnants had been overrun. Tactical reconnaissance reported that 20 enemy tanks came south and

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Considering there was little secure terrain in this point of the battle, it is questionable where they could have been landed.

began deploying south of Elst, about one third of the distance between the Nijmegen and Arnhem bridges. At midday, the 82d withdrew south of the Waal as 130 Brigade took over the bridgehead and two of its battalions cleared west Nijmegen. Finally, about 1230, as the Irish Guards pressed ahead, the lead troop was annihilated in ambush. Overhead, the "cab rank" of Typhoons, which had broken them out of a trap in identical circumstances only five days before, circled aimlessly as wireless communication broke down. Artillery support likewise failed. While the Irish Guards were held, a flanking attempt by the Welsh Guards also failed, and then the light was gone. They had gained but two of the 11 miles; the actual "advance" of the Guards had lasted 20 minutes.[810] (See figure 58.)

The Polish Brigade dropped near Driel at 1714 hours. Suffering casualties due to the closeness of the enemy, darkness and the lack of the operating ferry, Sosaboski's men were unable to cross the river. Their mission had been to immediately reinforce the 1 Airborne, which was known to be heavily pressed. Wireless link with 30 Corps had permitted the 64 Medium Regiment to fire close support missions throughout the day.[811]

Horrocks' plan had been to fan out to the west of the main road if it was blocked, first with the Guards Armoured, which had failed, and then with 43 Division as it assumed the assault while the Guards groups held the flank against the panzer

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[809] NARA, RG 331, FAAA, G-2 Summary Number 16, 191630 Sept, 1. On 19 September, FAAA's G-2 reported the presence of 9 SS on 14 September, apparently from 2 Army Report or ULTRA of 18 September.

[810] *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, 53-55; Major D.J.L. Fitzgerald, *History of the Irish Guards in the Second World War* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1949), 508-511; L.F. Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1946), 227, 228; Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*, 91.

[811] *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, ibid., 55-58.

block south of Elst. (See figure 59.) While 214 Brigade lost time due to mishaps and mistaken tracks taken, the Household Cavalry was able to link with the Poles at Driel, followed by two battalions of the Wessex in column. While some DUKWs were brought forward, they were found unsuitable due to the dikes, and few rafts were available. About 50 Polish paratroopers crossed the river into the airborne perimeter during the night. The 129 Brigade had pressed up the road directly toward Elst to break the block holding the Guards, but made little headway. (See figure 60.)[812]

The 43 Division commander, Maj. Gen. G.I. Thomas, ordered an attack to clear the Elst area on 23 September as it was apparent that a race was on between the Germans to build up an inpenetrable line, and the 43d Division to break a hold on the road to Arnhem while preparing a crossing to relieve the beleagured 1 Airborne Division. 30 Corps had meanwhile placed 32 Guards Brigade in the Veghel-Uden area to maintain a mobile reserve against attacks, while 5 Guards remained with 129 Brigade facing the German blocking positions south of Elst. The 214 Brigade launched a fading-light attack at day's end and gained the outskirts of the village of Elst in heavy fighting that lasted until 2200. Some 250 Polish paratroopers were ferried into the airborne perimeter north of the river, much of the time under shell and mortar fire. Many of the assault boats were dedicated to ferrying ammunition that had not been able to be supplied by air to the 1 Airborne position. Food and ammunition within the airborne perimeter had reached crisis proportions. While Montgomery began to doubt the ability to hold the perimeter, Dempsey remained unconvinced that disaster was at hand. Both Horrocks and Thomas considered that the failure to mount

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[812] *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, ibid., 58-61; FAAA, Ibid., 14, 15; Maj. Gen. H. Essame, *The*

a large crossing the night of the 23d had spelled an end to hope for holding a bridgehead.[813]

83 Group made an appearance over the airborne perimeter on 23 September for the first time, with 22 sorties flown the next day and 81 sorties on the 25th. Broadhurst complained that he could hear 1 Airborne calling for help on their Phantom link, but the Brereton restrictions concerning air support kept his Typhoons sitting on runways waiting for permission to help. While aircraft could attack identifiable targets in open areas, close support was impossible. Urquhart's positions were in heavy woods, and no direct radio links existed between the division and aircraft flying overhead.[814]

Dempsey's plan was to ferry another battalion over during the night of 24 September and, depending upon the rest of 30 Corps' situation, decide then either to withdraw the division under the cover of darkness on the night of 25/26 September, or mount a large assault crossing to relieve them. (See figures 61 and 62.) On the 24th, a meeting with Horrocks, Browning, Thomas, and Sosabowski was held to plan another crossing. Thomas, who would control the crossing, had decided to pass the 4th Dorsets and a Polish Battalion against the ferry site, and simultaneously pass the remaining Poles directly into the perimeter. Sosabowski argued against the plan, emphatically calling for a larger crossing downstream to ferry the majority of Thomas's division

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43rd Wessex Division at War 1944-1945 (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1952), 123-128.

[813] *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, ibid., 62-64; FAAA, ibid., 15, 16; *Montgomery Log*, 23 September; *Dempsey Diary*, 23 September; Essame, *43rd Wessex Division*, 128-132.

[814] *RAF Narrative, IV*, 152-154; Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*, 97, 98.

and the remainder of his brigade to the west. His plan was disapproved. The resulting crossing in the early hours of 25 September proved disastrous. [815]

The late arrival of assault boats had delayed the crossing, and while about 350 of the Dorsets crossed, as well as several tons of stores that were passed into the airborne perimeter, the late start and a lack of boats kept the Poles from crossing into the perimeter. The Dorsets, landing at the base of what was obviously vital ground, met immediate resistance and were soon fragmented by the terrain, darkness and the enemy. Most of the troops were lost. The failure of the Dorset crossing convinced Thomas that a withdrawal of Urquhart's division—not another reinforcing crossing—was the sole option remaining.[816]

It was the crisis in 30 Corps, however, that sparked the withdrawal order. Dempsey was clear when he said that 30 Corps' operations would determine how much effort was put into crossing the Neder Rijn; 1 Airborne, at least from the 23d, had been a victim awaiting the decision. The period of 24 hours on the 24th, during which the road was cut in the 101st Division area, had signaled the futility of attempting to press northward, as the flank situation had not been alleviated. (See figure 63.) Both Montgomery and Dempsey agreed that 1 Airborne had to be withdrawn. (See figure 64.) With the sending of the predetermined code word "Berlin," Urquhart was told to prepare his division to withdraw. That withdrawal came during the night of 25/26 September. Urquhart wrote, "At the back of my mind was Gallipoli," and his withdrawal plan on keeping the appearance of defending—the

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[815] Sosabowski, *Freely I Served*, 182-184, 198; Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 414-417; Essame, *43d Wessex Division*, 133-136; Choleswczynski, *Poles Apart*, 220-224; *A Short History of 30 Corps*, 36-38.

[816] Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, 418-422; Essame, *43d Wessex Division*, ibid.

result of his remembrance of studying the problem for a promotion exam. 43 Division provided a program of both artillery and machine gun fire, with the remainder of the 4th Dorsets assisting. Assault boats ferried some 2,163 men from 1 Airborne, 160 from the Polish Brigade, and 75 from the Dorsets. Approximately 180 men comprised a detachment left in contact, sacrificing themselves to hold the perimeter while the those able to leave withdrew.[817]

While MARKET had failed to gain its final objective, GARDEN had to fight to retain its 63-mile gain. Neither Dempsey or Montgomery was defeated, and both adjusted to the situation at hand. Other operations in Normandy, and before in Italy, Sicily, and Africa, had come up short of planned objectives. The reality of battle always was that campaigns were composed of many half-failures and half-successes. Despite his reputation for caution, Montgomery knew battle was always a gamble and that preparation and concentration were attempts to weight the odds in favor of victory, but they could never guarantee it.

The day Urquhart's sergeants major held formations to account for those present and those left behind, Montgomery and Dempsey met to plan the next stage of their drive to the Ruhr. Both expected that Hodges would come forward with a drive to the south of Dusseldorf. While Dempsey finished clearing Horrocks' flanks, Crerar would also press eastward with some forces to clear the terrain toward Hertogenbosch while using his remaining forces to move toward Antwerp. Nijmegen and the "island"

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[817] *21 Army Group MARKET GARDEN*, 69, 70; *Montgomery Log*, 25 September; *Dempsey Diary*, 25 September; Urquhart, *Arnhem*, 167.

remained to be defended. Both could be developed as later springboards to the Ruhr.[818]

On 27 September, Montgomery issued M.527. As if to explain the disappointment of MARKET GARDEN, he began:

> The enemy has re-acted violently since we launched the operations outlined in M 525 dated 14 September. He has had to give serious consideration to the threats to turn the Siegfried Line, to nullify the defensive value of the Rhine, and to outflank the RUHR.

Continuing, he repeated his plan:

> Intention
>
> (a) To open up the port of ANTWERP
>
> (b) In conjunction with First US Army on the right, to destroy all enemy forces that are preventing us from capturing the RUHR.[819]

Getting to the Ruhr, the object of his arguments and actions since the 17 August meeting with Bradley, still remained foremost in Montgomery's mind. Getting there rapidly, he believed, would be the only operational decision needed on the battlefield to end the Northwest Europe campaign rapidly.

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[818] *Montgomery Log*, 26 September; *Dempsey Diary*, 26, 27 September.

[819] M 527, 27-9-44.

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CHAPTER TEN

Denouement

On 15 September, prior to the launching of MARKET GARDEN, Eisenhower raised the question of the future phases in his Broad Front campaign. That day, Devers' Sixth Army Group was activated, giving Eisenhower operational control of all Allied armies in Northwest Europe. It was also the day of the "flap" over the presence of "German Panzer Divsions" in Holland. Ike obviously was nonplussed by the prospect, as he wrote Monty:

> We shall soon, I hope, have achieved the objectives set forth in my last directive (FWD 13765) and shall then be in possession of the RUHR, the SAAR and the FRANKFURT area. I have been considering our next move.

Noting that these objectives would have drained Germany's reserves, and that the direct attack on the remaining important objectives left within Germany would yield great opportunities, Eisenhower offered his own assessment:

> Clearly, BERLIN is the main prize, and the prize in defense of which the enemy is likely to concentrate the bulk of his forces. There is no doubt, whatsoever, in my mind, that we should concentrate all our energies and resources on a rapid thrust to BERLIN.

In outlining the objectives, he noted, it was too early to designate thrust lines, but the Allied forces must be prepared to do the following:

a. To direct forces of both Army Groups on Berlin astride the axes Ruhr-Hanover-Berlin or Frankfurt-Leipzig-Berlin, or both.

b. Should the Russians beat us to Berlin, the Northern Group of Armies would seize the Hanover area and the Hamburg group of ports. The Central Group of Armies would seize part, or the whole, of Leipzig-Dresden, depending upon the progress of the Russian advance.

c. In any event, the Southern Group of Armies would seize Augsburg-Munich. The area Nurnberg-Regensburg would be seized by Central or Southern Group of Armies, depending on the situation at the time.

Simply stated, it is my desire to move on Berlin by the most direct and expeditious route, with combined U.S.-British forces supported by other available forces moving through key centers and occupying strategic areas on the flanks, all in one coordinated, concerted operation.[820]

Three days before, Bradley had written emphasizing his views, and Eisenhower mollified him, saying if he [Bradley] could

> keep Hodges fully supplied up to the moment of his attaining his first principal objectives, then there is no reason why Patton should not keep acting offensively if the conditions for offensive action are right.[821]

Montgomery's reaction to Eisenhower's letter was to reiterate his case for a single concentrated thrust. Stating that Eisenhower's objectives were attainable with the forces in hand, eliminating the necessity of moving on Central Germany with the central army group. Montgomery's key argument, as he summarized it, was:

5. I consider the best objective the Ruhr, and thence on to Berlin by the northern route. On that route are the ports, and on that route we can use our seapower to the best advantage. On other routes we would merely contain as many forces as we could.
6. If you agree with para. 5, then I would consider that 21 Army Group, plus First Army of nine divisions, would be adequate. Such a force must have everything it needed in the maintenance line; other Armies would do the best they could with what was left over.
7. If you consider that para. 5 is not right, and that the proper axis of advance is by Frankfurt and central Germany, then I would suggest that 12 Army Group of three Armies would be used and would have all the maintenance. 21 Army Group would do the best it could with what was left over; or possibly the Second British Army

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[820] EL, Correspondence, GCT 370-31/Plans, 15 September, 1944; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2148-2149. He sent Bradley an identical letter.

[821] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2146-2147.

would be wanted in a secondary role on the left flank of the movement.

He stressed further, in a later paragraph:

> 8. I consider that our plan, and objectives, should be decided NOW, and everything arranged accordingly. I would not myself agree that we can wait until nearer the time, as suggested in your letter.[822]

Eisenhower had meanwhile been informed by his staff that in examining the relative priority of capturing Rotterdam or Antwerp as a port, they had determined that Antwerp should be given priority since it had been captured intact, and that the clearance of its channel would yield the quickest and surest dividend.[823]

MARKET's initiation on 17 September did nothing but intensify feelings concerning both viewpoints, given that Eisenhower had in fact committed SHAEF's strategic reserve, the Airborne Army, in an attempt to jump the Rhine. But, contrarily, Eisenhowert refused to shift forces to maintain operations as a single movement on the decisive axis to complement this reserve, despite the effect of hampering both advances by assigning a potentially larger force a thrust on a secondary avenue. Nor did Eisenhower see command as an issue. As long as priority was given to a northern advance, he felt Montgomery and Bradley could continue to coordinate their operations under his command.

Given the daily worsening weather, the increase in the strength of resistance, and the strain on logistics that would not be alleviated until Crerar was able to shake free of the Channel ports and put his full strength into the Scheldt, Montgomery felt

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[822] Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 250-251. This letter appears to be missing from the Eisenhower Correspondence File at the Eisenhower Library. It is listed as M.526 in the *Montgomery Log*.

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that "a wait and see to decide attitude" was tantamount to bringing on a front-wide halt in operations without obtaining an operational decision on the battlefield. This was the essence of the difference between Eisenhower's and Montgomery's operational philosophies, neither a reemergence of "ego over strategy" as held by SHAEF's detractors of the Field Marshal, nor a direct attack on Eisenhower's right to be "Allied Ground Forces Commander."

Montgomery, meanwhile, attempted to push Crerar into moving on Antwerp with his left-hand corps while using his right-hand corps, I (British) Corps to stretch to support Dempsey's left, which was in tactical crisis. He also continued to press Brereton for an airborne operation designated for Walcheren Island to open the Scheldt.[824] Despite Eisenhower's backing for an airborne operation to open the Scheldt, Brereton and Williams refused, citing the unsuitability of Walcheren as a target, though the airmen made no attempt to investigate alternative schemes to reinforce Crerar's Scheldt operation. Brereton, in fact, still wanted to use the Airborne Army within 12th Army Group's sector, regardless of the lack of strategic effect such an operation might have. This feeling grew stronger after the beginning of MARKET.[825]

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[823] *Post Overlord, Vol. I*, G-3, PS-SHAEF (44) 43, "Relative Priority of Operations for the Capture of Rotterdam and Antwerp," 16 September 1944.

[824] *Montgomery Log*, 20 September; EL Correspondence File, M-218, 20 September 44. This message asks for clarification on Walcheren Operation.

[825] *Post Overlord, Vol I*, Msg, FWD-15386, Eisenhower to VCAS, USSTAF for Spaatz, 21 Sep 44; MSG, FWD-15385, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 21 Sep 44; G-3 GCT 370-91 Plans, Sept 44, n.d, Rapid Capture of the Antwerp Area study, 1-4. See also *Brereton Diaries*, 349; *Parks Diary*, 18, 19 September. Note that the SHAEF planners had likewise ruled Rotterdam a poor airborne objective, though it had at one time been favored by Tedder and Brereton. See, *Post Overlord*, ibid., SHAEF GCT 370-91, 18 September 1944, Capture of Rotterdam, 1-4. Eisenhower's solution was to order maximum air assistance for operations against Walcheren, an order made meaningless by Tedder's decentralization of air in support of Montgomery.

While weather had kept Montgomery from flying to the battlefield earlier, he moved his tactical headquarters to Bourg Leopold on 21 September to be close to Second Army. His receipt of Eisenhower's reply to his M-526 raised the issue of command of the Northern Thrust in Montgomery's mind. Feeling that both 12th Army Group's insistence on shorting Hodges on supplies, and Eisenhower's belief that his and Montgomery's operational views were in accord, Montgomery now believed that only his control of ground operations north of the Ardennes could set the Allied strategy toward what he desperately believed to be the right course of action. Eisenhower had written:

> Generally speaking I find myself so completely in agreement with your letter of 18 September (M-526) that I cannot believe there is any great difference in our concepts.
>
> Never at any time have I implied that I was considering an advance into Germany with all armies moving abreast.

He continued, negating the first paragraphs of his letter:

> There is one point, however, on which we do not agree, if I interpret your idea correctly. As I read your letter you imply that all the divisions we have, except those of the 21st Army Group and approximately nine of the 12th Army Group, can stop in place *where they are* and that we can strip all these additional divisions from their transport and everything else to support one single knife-like drive toward Berlin. This may not be exactly what you meant but it is certainly not possible.
>
> What I do believe is that we must marshal our strength up along the Western borders of Germany, to the Rhine if possible, insure adequate maintenance by getting Antwerp working at full blast at the earliest possible moment and they [sic] carry out the drive you suggest. All of Bradley's Group, except his left army, which makes his main effort, will move forward sufficiently so as always to be in supporting position of the main drive and to prevent concentration of German forces against it front and flanks.

In furtherance of his points, Eisenhower added:

I merely want to make sure that when you start leading your Army Group in its thrust onto Berlin and Bradley starts driving with his left to support you, our other forces are in position to assure the success of that drive. Otherwise the main thrust itself would have to drop off so much of its strength to protect its rear and its flanks that very soon the drive would peter out.

As you know I have been giving preference to my left all the way through this campaign including attaching First Allied Airborne Army to you and adopting every possible expedient to assure your maintenance. All other forces have been fighting with a halter around their necks. . . .

When we get on the Rhine the next concern of Bradley's will be to put a strong fully equipped Army on his left to accompany you to Berlin.[826]

Humphrey Gale's personal delivery of this letter and his briefing on Bradley's logistical situation changed Montgomery's views concerning the "help" he was to be getting from Hodges or Bradley. He immediately asked that Eisenhower shift the inter-Army Group boundary farther north to permit him to send 8 Corps against Emmerich-Cleve, noting that failure to do so would cause Second Army's operation to "gradually peter out." Just as Bradley and his generals railed at Lee for failing to supply them, Montgomery told Eisenhower that Gale had brought on the mess, without specifically stating that Bradley had shifted supply priorities to Patton.[827] Monty's failure to fly to Versailles on 22 September, so as not to leave the critical MARKET-GARDEN battlefield, was viewed at SHAEF as a slap to Eisenhower, though Eisenhower apparently never accepted that as true.[828]

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[826] EL, Correspondence File, Letter, Eisenhower to Montgomery, September 20, 1944; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2164-2165.

[827] EL, Correspondence File, Messages, M.221, M.222, 21 September 1944.

[828] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Interview Eisenhower with S.L.A. Marshall, ibid.

Hoping to salvage what he now realized was a teetering operational situation, a situation made more critical by the slowness of Second Army to reach Arnhem, Monty sent a last message:

> Thank you very much for your letter of 20 September sent via Gale. I can not agree that our concepts are the same and I am sure you would wish me to be quite frank and open in the matter. I have always said stop the right and go on with the left but the right has been allowed to go on so far that it has out-stripped its maintenance and we have lost flexibility. In your letter you still want to go on further with your right and state in your Para. 6 that all of Bradley's Army Group will move forward sufficiently etc. I would say that the right flank of 12 Army Group should be given a very direct order to halt and if this order is not obeyed we shall get into greater difficulties. The net result of the matter in my opinion is that if you want to get the Ruhr you will have to put every single thing into the left hook and stop everything else. It is my opinion that if this is not done then you will not get the Ruhr.
>
> Your very great friend MONTY[829]

The 22nd of September proved to be a critical day, both for MARKET GARDEN, and for the direction of the ongoing campaign. The fresh appearance of German armor on 30 Corps' front and the time lost in shifting assault forces on Club Route doomed not just Frost's battalion at the bridge, but GARDEN itself, though that appreciation had not been admitted either at Second Army or at 30 Corps. Brereton had signaled that the fight for the corridor demonstrated that the enemy had not decided to relinquish Southern Holland, would attempt to confine 1 Airborne, and would continue to evacuate Fifteenth Army from harm's way.[830]

At Versailles, Eisenhower faced his generals, minus Montgomery, to assess the campaign. Twenty-three generals, air marshals, and admirals were in attendance.

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[829] EL, Correspondence File, Msg. M.223, 21 September 1944.

[830] *Post Overlord, I*, msg. VX-25396, Personal for Marshall, from Brereton signed Eisenhower, 22 September 1944.

The list of decisions provided with the minutes of the conference clearly outline Eisenhower's intentions:

> a. That all concerned differentiate clearly between the logistical requirements for attaining objectives covered by present directives, including seizing the RUHR and breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE, and the requirements for the final drive on BERLIN.
>
> b. That the fact will be generally accepted that the possession of an additional major deep-water port on our north flank was an indespensable prerequisite for the final drive deep into GERMANY.
>
> c. The envelopment of the RUHR from the north by 21st Army Group, supported by 1st Army, is the main effort of the present phase of operations.
>
> d. The boundary between 21st and 12th Army Groups . . . [was to be changed to reflect 21 Army Group's request to concentrate].
>
> e. The 12th Army Group to take over as quickly as possible the sector now held by 8th British Corps.
>
> f. (1) 12th Army Group to continue its thrust, so far as its current resources permit, towards COLOGNE and BONN. 12th Army Group will also be prepared to seize any favorable opportunity of crossing the RHINE and attacking the RUHR from the south when the maintenance situation permits.
>
> (2) The remainder of 12th Army Group to take no more aggressive action than is permitted by the maintenance situation after the full requirements of the main effort have been met.
>
> h. 21st Army Group to open the port of ANTWERP as a matter of urgency and to develop operations culminating in a strong attack on the RUHR from the north.[831]

Bradley would shift two divisions in ten days' time to assume 8 Corps' sector, and XV Corps would be shifted with its two divisions to Sixth Army Group to ease the maintenance situation.[832] Eisenhower sent a message confirming his intention to

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[831] *Post Overlord. I*, Memorandum for Chief of Staff, Supreme Commanders, Conference, 24 September; Minutes of Meeting Held in the War Room of SHAEF Forward at 1430 hrs., 22nd September 1944.

[832] Ibid., 3.

support the immediate capture of the Ruhr, and that he would give any necessary help to assure the immediate capture of Antwerp.[833]

Both De Guingand, who had attended the conference, and the Director of Military Operations, Lt. Gen. Simpson, who had visited SHAEF at that time, felt that the Versailles Conference had cemented a coherent campaign plan favoring a northern priority for operations. Importantly, Simpson noted that Bedell Smith knew Bradley and Patton had violated both the spirit and the letter of Eisenhower's directives. Simpson told Alanbrooke that getting the Americans to obey Ike's orders would be key, a problem Smith told Simpson he would make clear and which would be alleviated in the future.[834]

An immediate message was sent to Bradley, with a copy to Montgomery directing Hodges to support Montgomery's efforts. In a handwritten note on 24 September to Monty, Eisenhower stated his views from the conference at Versailles:

> [W]e have obtained complete understandings that should hold all the way from here to the completion of our present bid for the capture of the Ruhr.[835]

While the positive will offered by Eisenhower seemed to foretell an accommodation, which, if it didn't follow Montgomery's prescription for a continous manuever to drive to the Ruhr and beyond, would lead to more closely harmonized operations among the three Army Groups. But the past had proven to be prologue; there was ill will too strong to overcome in the American camp. MARKET GARDEN

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[833] EL, Correspondence File, Msg, FWD 15407, 22 Sept 44; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2175, 2176.

[834] LHC, *Alanbrooke Papers*, Memorandum for CIGS from VCIGS, 23 September 1944.

[835] EL, Correspondence File, Letter, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 24 September, 1944; typed copy in *Post Overlord, I*; *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2185, 2186.

continued an unhealable chasm that had widened between the Americans and British since Normandy. In Montgomery's mind, the decision to support a drive to the Ruhr had come one month too late, but in Bradley's mind, the decision never should have come at all. Bradley had, after all, been working to physically separate the Army Groups and to elimate any complementary benefit that closely harmonized or concentrated operations would have on 2d Army. Bradley's ego, not the specter of dead men resulting from failed operations that were inadequately supported, was the overriding factor in keeping the Army Groups from opening the key gateway into Germany in the fall of 1944. So it had been in August, and so it would continue throughout 1944.

Bradley's sabotage was clearly visible to everyone, it seems, except Eisenhower. In early September, Bradley had transferred 79th Division, leaving XIX Corps short of an infantry division throughout September, despite the larger open coastal flank to be cleared by the British and the northeastward orientation of Second Army that should have brought support from its southern neighbor. Given that Montgomery lacked a corps in early September, and with ULTRA warning both that the Fifteenth Army was escaping and that panzer divisions were initially located near Maastricht and were perhaps set for rehabilitation in Holland, the choice of diminishing the left flank corps and depriving it of both transportation and fuel appeared to be careless if not deliberate. Moreover, the encirclement at the Mons pocket in September opened a gap across what was the greatest single maneuver avenue into the Reich, the area north of Aachen. XIX Corps' armored division, the 2d, was starved of fuel, and another armored division, the 5th, was shifted southward to

enter Germany through the the constricted Ardennes-Eifel region as V Corps was angled south to support Third Army at the end of the first week of September. The corps entered Germany only to withdraw for lack of flank support.

As COMET was prepared and Hodges assigned corps objectives across the Rhine, the priority given to the two southern corps was designed to maintain the original design under Bradley's NORMANDY TO THE RHINE plan of August. When Brereton had recast LINNET into LINNET II, the airborne landing in the Maastricht-Aachen area (the mouth of the maneuver corridor to the Ruhr) Bradley turned it down, passing the airborne baton back to Monty while clamoring for Montgomery's planes to be taken away for fuel runs. LINNET II, and a concentrated drive by XIX Corps, might have opened the Aachen corridor during the critical first week of September, when little enemy opposition would have been met save antiaircraft fire. At the same instant, much time and precious fuel was lost in shifting forces on an axis south of Aachen during the height of the fuel crisis for no operational gain.

Hodges' reconnaissance in force of 12 September had failed and despite his and Patton's oaths that enough fuel and ammunition existed for a run to the Rhine, the advance soon halted for a logistical pause. Moreover, the long-suffering Corlett had not been advised of the change of boundary agreed to by the Army Groups prior to GARDEN, and he soon found British columns heading north, leaving his northern neighborhood empty of allies. Had Bradley even informed Hodges?

Hodges' thrust south of Aachen in the Stolberg Corridor fizzled from lack of strength, as did a wide deployment to clear the Hurtgen and to capture the Roer Dams.

Both attacks were uncoordinated and Hodges, fearing German-occupied Aachen to his rear, dropped off infantry to clear it rather than to envelop the city and keep the Roer plain approach fluid. The Germans built up defenses. Yet, First Army's G-2 had extolled the opportunities waiting, and on 15 September, had stated:

> The strategic opportunity offered at the moment to the First U.S. Army is enormous. A breakthrough in the sector of the V and VII Corps of the West Wall offers the possibility of a swift advance to the RHINE. This would force the enemy to evacuate the RHINE-LAND because he would then occupy a compromised line with an obstacle at his back. The cutting of strategic roads and bridges and the prevention of withdrawal across the RHINE could effect the destruction of the remaining western field forces.[836]

Bradley's split of resources between his armies forfeited the concentration needed to maintain momentum. The battles for the Stolberg corridor, Hurtgen, and the Roer Dams would stalemate into one of the bloodiest campaigns in U.S. Army history, all preventable had the Americans concentrated in their northern corridor when the enemy was still weak. Patton's own thrusts, head-on into concentrating German defenses, added tens of thousands of casualties to the West Wall campaign that stretched on for three months.[837]

While Montgomery had repeatedly pined over this opening and Bradley's lack of interest in developing a side-by-side offensive, Corlett had pressed Hodges, even as MARKET GARDEN was faltering. On 21 September, he had written:

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[836] NARA, RG 407, 101-2.15 to 101-3.0, Box 1956, First Army Intelligence Estimate No. 28, 15 September 1944.

[837] Hugh Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign* (Washington: Chief of Military History, 1950, 1981), passim; Anthony Kemp, *The Unknown Battle: Metz, 1944* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), passim; John Nelson Rickard, *Patton at Bay: The Lorraine Campaign, September to December 1944* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), passim; Edward G. Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground: The Huertgen Forest and the Roer River Dams, 1944-1945* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1995), passim.

[T]he whole XIX Corps zone up to the Rhine is almost an ideal battle-field and a natural gateway in Germany proper, across the Rhine. . . .

It is believed that if the 30th Infantry Division and the 2nd Armored Division were relieved of the responsibility of guarding the flank of First U.S. Army west of the Siegfried Line, they could with adequate artillery and air support go through all of this opposition to the Rhine in the vicinity of COLOGNE.[838]

On 26 September, Corlett, assessing his new mission of protecting the right flank of Second Army with the addition of 7th Armored and 29th Divisions, added:

> The terrain east of the MAAS River, with the exception of the SIEGFRIED LINE, is especially favorable for both armored and infantry action. A splendid road net exists. The ground is low and rolling from our front line positions to the RHINE in the vicinity of either COLOGNE or DUSSELDORF. The distance to the Rhine is about 60 kilometers.
>
> It is believed that the SIEGFRIED LINE can be breached on the front of the XIX Corps without undue losses. Such a breach would complete the encirclement of AACHEN and it is estimated would enable a force of sufficient size to advance quickly to the RHINE to secure a bridgehead across the RHINE, providing the left flank of the advance were properly secured by sufficient troops. Every day of delay will increase the difficulties of this task.[839]

The same day, Montgomery assessing his front and that of the Americans to his south, sent his intentions to Alanbrooke and published M.527. He stated his intentions clearly:

> (a) To open up the port of ANTWERP.
>
> (b) In conjunction with First US Army on the right, to destroy all enemy forces that are preventing us from capturing the RUHR.[840]

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[838] NARA, RG 407, Box 24117, "Combat Interviews," XIX Corps, Invasion Through the Siegfried Line, June-November 1944, Headquarters, XIX Corps, Memorandum for Commanding General, First US Army, 21 September 1944, 1.

[839] Ibid. "Combat Interviews," Headquarters, XIX Corps, Memorandum to Lieutentant General Courtney Hodges, 26 September 1944, 1.

[840] M-527, 27-9-44.

Assessing the enemy buildup north of the Neder Rijn and in the area east and southeast of Nijmegen, Montgomery noted the benefits accrued from MARKET GARDEN:

> [W]e are favourably situated in that we hold main road crossings over the MEUSE and the RHINE on the EINDHOVEN-NIJMEGEN axis, and thus have the ability to operate south-eastwards between these two rivers. Such a thrust, in conjunction with a strong advance eastwards on KOLN and DUSSELDORF by First US Army on our right, would be difficult for the enemy to hold.

(See figure 65.) The Nijmegen bridgehead, he noted further, posed a "threat" to the enemy of a further assault northward and a possible river crossing. The upcoming "killing match" at the door of Germany, demanded more closely harmonized operations:

> [I]t is clear that the armies which are to capture the RUHR should not now operate on divergent axes.
>
> They must operate on *convergent* thrust lines, and thus become such a powerful force that the enemy will not be able to stand against the combined might of the two armies.
>
> The objective, and the prize, is the RUHR; its capture will mean the beginning of the end for Germany.

His armies would continue to clear up the coast, with Crerar's Canadian Army masking Dunkirk, completing operations against Calais and Boulogne, and "at once" developing operations to open Antwerp. A strong thrust to clear Dempsey's left was also ordered. Dempsey's maintenance of the corridor and a strong posture facing north had to continue, but his new tasks, depending upon logistics, would be

> to operate strongly with all available strength from the general area NIJMEGEN-GENNEP against the N.W. corner of the RUHR.
>
> The right flank of the movement will be directed on KREFELD.

> On the left flank, the RHINE will be crossed as and where opportunity offers, and in particular every endeavour will be made to get a bridgehead at WESEL.[841]

Having met with Bradley and Hodges and "coordinated" their plans, he noted that the 7th (US) Armored Division would clear the area south of the Peel Marshes and act as a link between the Second and First Armies. More importantly, he noted as his understanding of the agreed-upon plan that:

> The [First] Army is to develop as early as possible a strong offensive movement eastwards up to the RHINE.
>
> The main weight of the movement will be directed on COLOGNE. The left flank of the movement will be directed on DUSSELDORF. Bridgeheads over the RHINE will be secured as opportunity offers.

He noted under "*Subsequent Operations*" that:

> The converging movement of the Second British Army and First US Army against the N.W. and S.W. corners of the RUHR area respectively will be developed in each case as early as is possible. Close touch and liaison will be necessary between the two armies.[842]

Eisenhower's letters of 23 September to Bradley, copied to Montgomery, had made it clear that Bradley

> should direct Hodges to exert his main effort to meet the Field Marshal's developing requirements. To save time, particularly in such emergencies as immediately needed adjustments of inter-army group boundaries or in suddenly arising tactical situations, the Field Marshal should communicate directly with Hodges. . . . Each Army Group Commander will . . . report to me any development that, in his judgement, prejudices the accomplishment of tasks assigned to his Army Group.[843]

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[841] Ibid., 2.

[842] Ibid., 3.

[843] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 283.

Ike's letter of 24 September, clarifying his agreement "on the present bid for the capture of the Ruhr," strengthened Montgomery's deeply wished and fervently held belief that Second Army would assault the Ruhr and that the Americans would cooperate by assaulting it from the south with First Army. Without stating it as such, 22 September conference had granted Monty a strong position in bringing on that decisive battle, and Hodges was told to "exert his main efforts to meet" 21 Army Group's requirements.[844] Also, importantly, Eisenhower had responded to Monty's M.527 with a note approving of the changes brought about by the Arnhem setback, noting kindly that:

> These slight changes are to be expected in all battles, and I must say I am delighted to have you so close to that critical spot . . . and I hope to be able to run up to see you very quickly.[845]

Since early September, Montgomery had been fighting two military campaigns and one very political one. He had, of necessity, been using half his force to clear the Channel Coast, not simply to reduce enemy garrisons left in his rear but to open ports needed for the sustenance of his army. Le Havre, the first of the major ports, was to be given to the Americans to replace port facilities they themselves had failed to capture in Brittany. It had taken two divisions, thousands of bomber sorties, and a significant

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[844] *Eisenhower Papers, IV*, 2183, 2185.

[845] EL, Correspondence File, Letter to Montgomery, 27 September 1944. The same day, Montgomery submitted to Eisenhower his recommendation to the King for a shower of awards, to include a Knight Commander of the Bath for Bradley, five Companions of the Bath, 10 awards for US staff officers who had served alongside 21 Army Group in Normandy, and valor awards for the MARKET operation to include Distinguished Service Orders, Military Crosses, Distinguished Conduct Medals and Military Medals. Monty asked for Eisenhower's recommendations for these awards. See Correspondence File.

portion of the specialized armor from the 79th Armoured Division to reduce Le Havre. The remaining ports contained the rest of Crerar's six divisions.[846]

As MARKET GARDEN began, 2 Canadian Corps' "front" ranged from west of Antwerp, west about 70 miles to Zeebrugge on the coast, southwestward for about an equal distance to Cape Griz, and then about 30 miles southward past Boulogne. While Simonds' two infantry divisions invested Boulogne and the area west of Antwerp, the remainder of the front was screened by armoured divisions, and Dunkirk by a Special Service Brigade.[847]

The escape of the Fifteenth Army and the decision not to move northward immediately into Holland had resulted from an eagerness to continue the pursuit eastward with Second Army while retaining Crerar's Canadians for a separate set of battles on the left. The decision to launch COMET, the operation at issue here, was decided upon, even as Antwerp's docks were being taken by Roberts's armor. In some measure, these decisions were also the result of a lack of timely operational intelligence plus the fact that no intelligence officer or agency had yet to assess not only that the German ability to rehabilitate what was believed to be a destroyed army exceeded any commonly held beliefs in the matter, but that virtually all the enemy loss estimates that had fed the "victory disease" had been inflated.

ULTRA had trumpeted the beginnings of the Fifteenth Army move northward on 6 September. It announced the Fuhrer's policy of defending "fortresses" designed

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[846] NARA, ML-2250, Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters, Report No. 146, Operations of the Canadian Army in Northwest Europe, 31 July 1944-1 October 1944, passim.

[847] Ibid., Situation Map, 2 Canadian Corps, 19 Sep 44; pages 34-58, passim. The shortage of infantry divisions in both Crerar's and Dempsey's armies was a major operational deficiency during this phase

to prevent the expedient use of Channel Coast ports by the Allies. Both were key decision points for the Germans, and as such should have received prominent review in the Allied camp. Eisenhower, however, as the custodian of the entire front, registered no comment over these events nor did Montgomery, whose own operational design had been cast, see any reason to reevaluate his plans for either 21 Army Group or the employment of First Allied Airborne Army.

From Montgomery's perspective, the clearing of his rear, or the shift of forces due northward, would have stopped all eastward movement, a factor which also would have caused major reevaluation of First US Army's objectives in relation to Eisenhower's 4 September directive. If the Ruhr and the Saar were still objectives, Montgomery could do no less than he was to maintain his plans, as well as his bold, creative decision to launch COMET both to outflank the Ruhr and to trap Fifteenth Army and maintain the separation of the two northern German armies in Army Group B.

Considering the strength of enemy forces available and the great frontage that in Montgomery's case was semicircular (ranging from south of Boulogne, to Antwerp, east to the Albert Canal, and then southward to Maastricht) he could have unilaterally stopped one of his three operations—at the coast, at Antwerp, or in maintaining a thrust to gain a bridgehead on the Rhine before logistics and weather closed the possibility. As all these missions were within his directive from Eisenhower, he could demand more resources or a shift in strategy from Eisenhower. While minimal logistical help was provided for the enlarged COMET—now MARKET—operation, the most effective help available, a concerted thrust by First Army to relieve pressure,

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of the campaign. While the armor could rapidly peg out territorial claims, it was useless to clear the

draw reserves, and widen Model's operational dilemna was not forthcoming. This was never offered due to the continuing attempt by Bradley to develop an already faltering, and always operationally questionable, drive on the Saar.

Eisenhower did promise force relief, frequently stating in messages, letters, and at conference that "Bradley's left is striking hard to support you," both to complement Montgomery's operations and to weaken the enemy on his front.[848] This fantasy was either deliberate lie meant for tidying Eisenhower's "record" of Allied solidarity, or a reflection of Eisenhower's personal weakness and SHAEF's operational irrelevance in shaping the ground campaign. Unfortunately, it played to Montgomery's theme, raised as recently as 21 September, that he needed to coordinate operations north of the Ardennes, a military consideration; the unfolding events did show that Montgomery was correct concerning the orchestration of coordinated operations.[849] Eisenhower at no time attempted the planning, timing, coordination or execution of such complementary operations, leaving the "coordination" of such matters to Montgomery, who obtained what he thought was agreement from Bradley—whose Trojan Horse tactic was to agree, then ignore and, if need be, lie about such operations, stymieing them and overturning Eisenhower's "decisions."

This was the situation that obtained after 27 September, when MARKET GARDEN's final objective had been abandoned. Not only could Montgomery not stop operations to consolidate around Nijmegen, Second Army fought off heavy attacks all along the corridor. In early October, the enemy panzer concentrations against

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ports or to operate north of the Scheldt.

[848] EL, Correspondence File, 16 September 1944, ibid.

Dempsey near Nijmegen would eventually reach elements of four divisions.[850] Montgomery's attempt to coordinate attacks from XIX Corps south of 8 Corps' wide-open flank toward Venlo also obtained minimal assistance from Bradley, who simultaneously hampered his own encirclement of Aachen in the process by continuing to favor Patton both with fuel and with the southeastward push of V Corps into the Eifel region.

Montgomery's failure to stop operations toward the Ruhr stemmed from his belief that he should not let the enemy dig in on the Siegfried Line, especially since he was going to have to operate between the Maas and Rhine rivers. Foolishly believing that Bradley would see the Venlo area as an encirclement opportunity, he continued to attempt to simultaneously open ports while maintaining some move on the Ruhr. He would wait for the Canadians to finish their concentration following their port operations on the coast.[851]

Bradley's own directive at this time permitted clearing the Maas area; it did not order any move on Dusseldorf or any coordinated operations.[852] The opposite, in fact, was true. Bradley's intent, if First Army reached the Rhine, was that First Army

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[849] LHC, *Alanbrooke Papers*, Memorandum for Lt-Gen Bedel[sic] Smith, 21-9-44.

[850] *Montgomery Log*, 1 October. He identified these as 116 Panzer, 9 Panzer, and 10 SS Panzer, while noting that 9 SS Panzer remained in sector.

[851] *Montgomery Log*, 28 September. Montgomery notes the time for shifting fully to the north to be approximately three weeks. Crerar later returned to Canada for medical treatment for recurring dysentery during the actual operations. Montgomery had hoped that Simonds would remain in command.

[852] *12th Army Group Report of Operations, V*, G-3, Letter of Instructions, Number Nine, 25 Sep 44; Letter of Instructions, Number Ten, 28 Sep 44, pp. 93-96.

would turn southward to gain crossing positions for Third and Ninth Army. First and Third Army would cross the Rhine together.[853]

Enemy action, supply, ammunition shortages within the American armies, bad weather, and a suddenly rehabilitated German army ended Montgomery's hope of a single, seamless drive on to the Ruhr. Eisenhower's acceptance that the Ruhr was a priority, given on 24 September, had reverted to the need to move all the armies up against the Rhine. Eisenhower's statement that he had never intended all the armies to move forward simultaneously, a lie when stated, had become policy by the campaign's own results. The MARKET GARDEN campaign, now over, could not change this. Montgomery's refusal to accept Ike's strategy tied his belief in a concentrated thrust to the command issue, and would soon reappear to cloud and corrupt any analysis of the Broad Front design.[854]

On 7 October Montgomery sent Eisenhower his own appreciation of the situation in the north, stating that enemy resistance, increased enemy strength, and the necessity to concentrate on Antwerp had caused him to decide the following:

> I therefore consider that I cannot launch Second Army towards the RUHR until I have eliminated the following commitments:
>
> Finished the operations opening ANTWERP.
>
> Pushed the enemy back over the MEUSE.

He continued:

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[853] NARA, RG 407, Box 24143, 12th Army Group Plans and Studies, Operations East of the Rhine, 5 October 1944, p. 1.

[854] *Montgomery Log*, 5 October. In this entry, Montgomery records his attendance at an Eisenhower conference where the entire campaign plan again was revisited. Montgomery, clinging to Eisenhower's notes regarding the 22 September Versailles conference, argued for priority in the north, which he had understood to be Eisenhower's decision. See messages M-260, 6 October; Eisenhower to Monty, 7 October; M-264; M-266; 7 October; M-268, 9 October.

I have therefore ordered that the attack of Second Army towards KREFELD and the RUHR be postponed.[855]

The MARKET GARDEN CAMPAIGN was over.

The fact that Montgomery's August plan had not been accepted and could not be revisited even by gaining a Rhine bridgehead had not sunk in, though neither reason was the cause of the fall stalemate. Those reasons lay in the nature of the campaign and the complexity of the command relations that led to the failure of MARKET GARDEN.

The campaign was not simply the result of an operational design. It reflected tactical realities that shaped what was operationally possible; it was distorted by the philosophies and doctrines of the separate services that made compromise, not a single solution, a requirement for every problem; and it reflected the differences in generalship displayed by the senior commanders, differences distorted by their own personalities, their ambitions, and their portrayal in the press.

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[855] EL, Correspondence File, Untitled Memorandum, 7 October 1944, sgnd, B.L. Montgomery, 7-10-44.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The MARKET GARDEN Campaign: An Appreciation of the Factors and Controversies Surrounding Allied Operations in the Late Summer and Early Fall of 1944 in Northwest Europe

The 1944 campaign that culminated in the launching of Operation MARKET GARDEN is enlightening for its richness in diverse factors that influenced the conduct of operations, and for the insights it offers into the problems of conducting joint military operations as part of a coalition. While a detailed discussion of the political factors that influenced the campaign would be instructive, it is beyond the scope of the military nature of this study, and it is to the dominant military factors that we now turn.

Central to any campaign discussion must be an understanding of the relative combat power issues that dominated the campaign. In Northwest Europe, the basis for thinking on the relative combat strengths of the opposing armies was a key element in planning from the beginning. COSSAC's planners set an unrealistic standard for success in the OVERLORD campaign, that being the belief that anything but the broadest, subjective comparison of "combat power" was irrelevant in planning for the operation. This assessment was seen in a specific number of enemy divisions that were "acceptable" in theater to permit the NEPTUNE landings to be considered a "sound operation of war." Later, as intelligence was produced for the NEPTUNE beaches, the addition of beach obstacles and larger minefields was not given heavier weight. Most important, ULTRA failed to confirm in a timely manner the locations of two divisions, one an infantry division on the coast, and the second, the 21st Panzer

Division, located near Caen and literally on the D-Day objective line for Second Army.[856] This further skewed the during-battle analysis of operations concerning success and failure of the early landings, and has been the foundation for much of the misunderstanding concerning the relative "worth" of the forces involved. That SHAEF was apparently unaware of the subtleties of such differences demonstrated the lack of battle "experience" possessed by many of the staff, to include the Supreme Commander, for whom war never progressed beyond the theoreticals of a map exercise.

The existence of the heavier German defense was never accepted by SHAEF, or by Montgomery's critics as a contributor to the loudly proclaimed "failure" of Montgomery at Caen. More important, the remarkably unsophisticated analysis of German defense strength that followed the landings likewise limited a clear vision of German capabilities. Among many possible factors, two cases in point are instructive. These revolved around tank strengths/capabilities, and the numerical assessment of antitank guns available to the defense. Both equated to a tremendous antitank capability. Given the armor-heavy nature of Second Army, the inability of British Shermans or Cromwells to compete at even odds with German tanks or guns negated the "divisional" comparisons used at SHAEF for a correlation of forces estimate. German tanks killed Allied tanks at far higher ratios, and German antitank guns also achieved very favorable ratios. While Montgomery's critics claimed that he and his commanders did not understand how to use armor, Allied armor was—in any attack,

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[856] Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, 3, Part 2, Chapters 43-44; Appendix 10. Hinsley never admits that ULTRA had "failed." See SHAEF Weekly Summary No.11, 3 June 1944; SHAEF Weekly Summary No. 12, Order of Battle Map Entitled, "Enemy Order of Battle in West Normandy as at 5 June 1944."

deliberate or hasty—highly disadvantaged by their own vulnerabilities. That armor men failed to commit suicide in larger numbers by pressing attacks such as EPSOM, GOODWOOD, TOTALIZE, or TRACTABLE should have been seen as part of the tactical equation, not necessarily a failure in generalship or nerve on the part of Montgomery or Dempsey. The ability to neutralize enemy reserves and antitank screens in depth was beyond the capability of the artillery of the day, and the use of airpower to make up these deficiencies was at that time both marginally effective and controversial.[857]

While the close defensive battles of Normandy showed shortcomings in armor, the pursuit that followed the breakout on both the American and British fronts demonstrated that Montgomery did understand the role of armor in the pursuit. He concentrated his armored divisions and used them to lead slower-moving and less mobile infantry divisions whose organic transportation prevented their own self-movement. Given that when Montgomery surfaced his concentrated northern thrust plan, there were 13 armored divisions, plus seven independent armored brigades with the British and Canadians, plus numerous independent tank and tank destroyer battalions in the US forces, this gave SHAEF a tank superiority far in excess of Hitler's 1940 blitzkrieg.[858]

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[857] Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*, Chapter 5, passim; Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *Fire-Power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War 1904-1945* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), Part 4, passim.

[858] EL, SHAEF G-3 War Room Summary, 23 August 1944. Independent brigade numbers from Ellis, *Victory in the West, I*, Appendix 4. Allied tank strengths per division averaged 250, for tank brigades, 220 tanks. The author estimates that the tank vs. tank ratio of Allied tanks versus "running" German tanks on 1 September would have been in excess of 20:1. Ellis contains a useful comparison of German and Allied organizations and weapons.

Unlike the 1940 German campaign in the west, where the armor was used both to create a hole in the front and then to exploit it, these divisions could have been concentrated against a strategic object and easily maintained a frontage of 100 to 150 miles. Eisenhower, like the French in 1940, chose to spread his armor, which while carrying his general advance, achieved no operational decision. With the front congealed in September, the advantage of mobility was lost, and the true calculus of tank vs. tank and tank vs. antitank again obtained, with the same bloody results seen as in Normandy. Though the use of armor is a subset of the larger-scale operational plan, SHAEF considered neither these factors nor, apparently, any other tactical factors in designing their overall campaign plan, though lip service was paid to the idea of using avenues that enhanced armor and air power capabilities.

The "phase line" comparisons made at SHAEF to "prove" that Montgomery's operations had moved too slowly in Normandy were never adequate measures of battlefield success. By September, though, they underscored the impending logistical collapse possible due to distance from ports, and they posed false positive results concerning operations. Distance and phase lines as depicted in SHAEF's forecasts did not equate to enemy force destruction, nor did they focus the weight of Allied efforts to key operational and strategic objectives. More deceptively, the rapid transit of phase lines beyond SHAEF's original forecasts did not guarantee that further successes would be gained as rapidly, nor did they provide adquate measures of future sustainment. Rather, they provided the information that was not acted upon at SHAEF—the priority that needed to be established for capturing the original ports planned for as part of the NEPTUNE campaign.

The entire logistical crisis was created by two factors: a lack of operating ports, and the distance from ports to the front lines due to the lack of intermediate supply dumps, hence a transportation problem. Montgomery had recast the weight of the Allied attack in NEPTUNE to favor a westerly attack, not simply to gain the key port of Cherbourg but to launch early attacks to gain the key Brittany ports. Airborne plans cast early in the Normandy campaign at both SHAEF and 21 Army Group favored early capture of these ports. The key "CHASTITY" plan, designed to solve both the port and rail distance problems for deploying US divisions in Brittany likewise was a key consideration added by the planners.

With the pursuit on in August and early September, and Bradley tending to go more his own way, Eisenhower neither insisted upon nor questioned Bradley's lack of success in opening the Quiberon Bay area for CHASTITY, or in capturing Brest, despite the priority given to these objectives, both in Montgomery's directives and, as he assumed command, in Eisenhower's. With the decreased ability to sustain divisions farther from the ports; the desire for momentum to be maintained; the large number of self-mobile armored divisions available; and the failure to favor armored and some motorized divisions while infantry was left to open the ports centered on one consideration alone—Eisenhower's strategy to have a "broad front," a pre-OVERLORD concept of operations whose basic assumptions had been nullified by the operational situation in August.

An additional factor, as dominant as logistics, that affected both the battlefield and the overall campaign design was "the air weapon." While this originally comprised the use of the strategic and tactical air forces for the theater, it grew to

include the Allied Airborne Army, dominated and designed by airmen. It was intended by Arnold and Brereton as the ultimate symbol and "proof" that the air and ground were equal portions of any operational situation, portions that could and in the case of the Airborne Army, should, be commanded by airmen.

The philosophy or doctrine of "equality or independence in every situation," as espoused by the airmen, was used by them as a constant source of variance in any operation in which air forces' participated. As a result, the control of aircraft prompted some of the war's bitterest controversies. While the "Combined Bomber Offensive" known as POINTBLANK remained in the hands of the Combined Chiefs of Staff through their executive agent, Air Chief Marshal Portal, the airmen resented and resisted any attempt to make their "strategic" weapon a theater commander's weapon. The control of the strategic bombers for OVERLORD not only prompted a three-month controversy, its acceptance was intertwined by personal ambition and air force politics in attempting to destroy the tactical "Air Commander-in-Chief," Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory. It is nearly impossible to escape the conclusion that Leigh Mallory, as a former "Army Cooperation Command" commander, was not the "right kind of chap" for the disciples of Douhet, Trenchard, and Mitchell.[859] While the RAF had successfully killed the Army's requests for its own dedicated aircraft to match the Nazis' capability, those such as Tedder saw to it that they would ensure that their American Air counterparts, whom he suspected as "Brown Jobs," understood the

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[859] EL, Correspondence, Letter to Portal concerning Leigh Mallory, 22 July 1944. Eisenhower changed his mind about Leigh Mallory and was unsuccessful in keeping him in theater. Tedder and Spaatz engineered his departure.

doctrine of an Independent Air Force.[860] The "AAF," accepting a truce in the their own quest for independence for the duration of the war, had been given carte blanche by US Army Chief of Staff Marshall, but many American airmen remembered their roots and were far less prone to turn down pleas for help than their azure-uniformed RAF counterparts.

The basic philosophical difference advanced by the RAF and then published in the US Army Air Forces' manual, "Command and Employment of Air Power," was that:

> LAND POWER AND AIR POWER ARE CO-EQUAL AND INTERDEPENDENT FORCES; NEITHER IS AN AUXILIARY OF THE OTHER.[861]

While no ground soldier would argue that this did not apply to the Strategic Air Offensive against Germany, it did not match the reality of the battlefield, nor did it offer a synchronized use of air-ground forces unless someone, and some plan, dominated the other. In the case of the US Army Air Forces, whose huge size permitted large tactical and strategic air forces that did not jeapordize fielding a large army, philosophical issues reigned less as large numbers of aircraft were assigned to support Bradley's forces.

For the British Army, whose size had been slashed proportionally from its Great War force of 3,759,000 men that included 1.6 million infantrymen and 66 divisions, to a 2,920,000-man force of only 24 divisions worldwide (with only eight

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[860] The United States Army Air Forces, a component of the Army, wore "brown" Army uniforms. See Owen, *Tedder*, passim.

[861] War Department Field Manual FM 100-20, *Command and Employment of Air Power*. 21 July 1943, 1. This entire section is both bold-faced and capitalized in the original, a first in US manuals.

divisions in Second Army in September 1944), the issues went beyond the philosophy of force employment and doctrine. Royal Air Force strength exceeded 1,000,000 men in 1944 and was about 950,000 at war's end, compared to the 291,000 total of 1918. Combined with a navy that had also doubled in size from World War I, the manpower issue restricted combat options for the British and required the Army to look for increased firepower and flexibility from the concerted use of airplanes in a harmonized air-ground battle.[862] Despite the fact that the million-man RAF had been "bought" with personnel, monies, and technology that would have made the British Army a world-class force, the airmen resisted aiding the army at every turn. Tedder and Coningham viewed the increased ineffectiveness of their air-ground team compared to their American and German counterparts as indicative of British Army incompetence, a favorite topic of Coningham in every venue possible.[863]

Eliminating the ability of the Air C-in-C to call on bombers was a success claimed by Tedder and Spaatz until Eisenhower, realizing that his ground campaign was in dire straits, acceded to ideas proposed by his fallen airman, Leigh Mallory, to use bombers in close support. This enraged both Tedder and Coningham, whose own personal hatred of Montgomery significantly hampered operations. Coningham had told his American understudy, General E.R. "Pete" Quesada, that he made it a firm rule never to do anything he was told to do by the army. He didn't expect to see a plan, and then be asked how the air would support. He wanted to be present when the

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[862] Perry, *Commonwealth Armies*, 56, 74, 75; Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, 260-275.

[863] Interview with Lt. Gen. Quesada, who told author that Coningham's statements in conferences and at every opportunity "to run down the British Army" went beyond vicious, and would have been cause for his immediate relief in the US forces.

problem was announced and be part of the basic planning for the operation. He strongly recommended that the Americans always do the same.[864]

There was never any doubt, particularly after the German blitz of 1940, that the British Army saw a definite role for airpower in the ground battle. In Montgomery's view, airpower should first "win the air battle" and then provide assistance as agreed upon to support the ground battle, both in close support and deep interdiction operations. Montgomery, in fact, accepted and sought to practice a doctrine later accepted by the world's air forces, but which Tedder and Coningham had discarded after its success in the desert for a more bureaucratic approach requiring multiple levels of approval for target requests, air mission requests, and allocation of effort that slowed response time to make the intervention of airpower in an opportune fashion almost impossible.

The Cab-Rank system of on-call aircraft, favored by Broadhurst and the Army, was unpopular with Coningham, though adopted with great enthusiasm by the Americans, who called it "Column Cover."[865] The issue, as viewed by the airmen, was one of effective use of aircraft, mainly to prevent losses, as opposed to most effective use of airpower to influence the ground battle. While the calculus of machine-gunning trucks 100 miles behind the front might eventually yield some dimension of battlefield effect over time, the vagaries of battle often required immediate intervention to attack the enemy reserves and subsequent gun-lines out of the range of artillery, to attack enemy reserves as they deployed, to stop movement on the battlefield, or to attack

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[864] Interview, Lt. Gen. E.R. Quesada with author, 1984.

[865] Gooderson, *Air Power at the Battlefront*; ETO Air Board, *Third Phase Airpower*, passim.

known defensive concentrations. Given the superiority of the German army in armor, antitank guns, and their large number of divisions, this added combat power was a necessity for an army with inferior tanks and a lack of personnel replacements. To the host of fighter-bombers and medium bombers dedicated for 2 Tactical Air Force, Leigh Mallory had added heavy bombers as an emergency stopgap. Their use, though of mixed results, proved crucial in the July and early August battles in Normandy, and was critical in speeding the capture of the Channel ports. The set-piece battles used to capture the ports all used extensive bomber programs laid on by Leigh Mallory and Harris to support Crerar, whose own assets, particularly in ammunition, were of necessity limited by Dempsey's operations, which also needed support.[866]

As Coningham failed to achieve Montgomery's relief by claiming the "Army plan had failed," he went after Montgomery's air supporters, both the 2 TAF group commanders. He succeeded in relieving the 84 Group Commander, Brown, while failing to sack the efficient and popular Broadhurst.[867] Thus, at a time when operations became more dynamic, Coningham sought to go his own way, loudly complaining that the ground force's unit boundaries—needed to confine and control operations— hampered the air effort, and damning the army for their refusal to have ground boundaries conform to his desires for "air sectors."[868]

One of the tenets that Montgomery had preached had been that air and ground headquarters had to be together. Monty had moved his headquarters rearward to match

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[866] *RAF Narrative, IV*, passim; Leigh Mallory Despatch, 100-109.

[867] NAC, *Churchill Mann Papers*, "Lecture on Air Support"; *Crerar Papers*, RG 24, Volume 10636, Letter Montgomery to Crerar, 13-9-44. This letter begins, "Dear Harry, Coningham has told the Air Ministry that your A.O.C. (Brown) is no good, that you do not like him, and you want him changed."

the location behind the lines to which the RAF headquarters had fled during the First Alamein battles. In Europe, Monty had considered Leigh Mallory his opposite number, and Coningham, who did not leave England until late in the Normandy campaign, never moved alongside 21 Army Group. As the campaign developed, neither would move rearward or forward to collocate. This further separated the concept of a harmonized "air-ground battle," though Monty had hoped the two group commanders, who after all did the targeting and allocation of squadrons, would cooperate. They did, earning Coningham's eternal hatred.

Coningham posed a significantly difficult problem during MARKET GARDEN. Here, air coordination reached its nadir. Leigh Mallory, already alerted to leave for Southeast Asia as a result of the machinations of Tedder, still should have maintained strong control of air operations, as AEAF remained the executive agent for coordinating air missions to support airborne operations, though Eisenhower and Brereton never permitted him authority to override plans despite promises made to that effect in late August during the formation of the airborne army.[869]

Air coordination for MARKET was spotty. While Leigh Mallory received cooperation from Spaatz and Vandenburg, 2 TAF failed to send representation to a key planning meeting on 15 September, and only six days before, the air commanders had decided in conference that AEAF's control of tactical air forces was no longer "practicable" from either Stanmore or Granville and that the AEAF should restrict itself to strategic operations. On 14 September, the CCS removed control of the

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[868] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Pogue Interview with Air Marshal Coningham, 14 February 1947; Coningham, *Operations of 2 TAF*, 71-73.

[869] See discussion in Chapter Four.

strategic bombers from the theater commander, and Tedder, though still considered Eisenhower's senior airman, had no brief for the control of bombers, which now had been delegated to the direct control of Spaatz and Harris.[870] Despite Tedder's attitude, Harris supported Crerar's Army throughout September, launching large air programs to assist the capture of Le Havre, Boulogne, and Calais.[871]

While this perilous attitude of noncooperation pervaded the air commands at the beginning of the MARKET GARDEN campaign, the status of the Airborne Army further muddled operational effectiveness. The RAF had opposed the formation of airborne divisions due to the requirement for transport, tugs, and gliders, but the American air chief, Hap Arnold, embraced the idea enthusiastically, creating a huge air transport capability. While Eisenhower had sought to centralize the training and support of the airborne under a unified command, Brereton, following on Arnold's lead, had manipulated the command into an "Airborne Army," another variant of the air weapon that Arnold sought to use to gain Air Force independence and a force that he had hoped to absorb into a postwar independent air force.[872]

Brereton's ignorance of the requirements of ground battle, and his refusal to learn, had been amply demonstrated during the frenetic planning of August and early September and had resulted in a serious breach in personal and professional respect between himself and his Deputy Army Commander, "Boy" Browning. Perhaps it was Browning's desire to heal this breach that caused him to be less forthright during the planning for MARKET. Certainly Brereton's quick dismissal of Browning's outline

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[870] *RAF Narrative, IV*, pp. 125, 148; Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 273-275.

[871] Ibid., *RAF Narrative, IV*.

plan to favor Taylor's demands should have been cause for a deep operational analysis of the commander's intent rather than a quick compromise solution affected by placing Taylor under 30 Corps for planning. Moreover, the substitution of Williams for Hollinghurst, who had been the principal transport commander designate during the planning period, substituted a far less bold, doctrinaire commander in place of someone who was more willing to assist in the ground battle. The confluence of these events added fatal flaws to the MARKET plan.[873]

Likewise, Brereton's attitude toward the British posed a problem in a multiservice, multinational operation. While he spoke daily with Smith at SHAEF and turned somersaults to please Ike, Spaatz, and Arnold in Washington, he never once ventured forward prior to the operation to speak with Montgomery or Dempsey, the men whom he would support in most of the plans hatched by First Allied Airborne Headquarters.[874] He did visit Bradley on a number of occasions, and spent hours with Ridgway attempting to create opportunities for airborne drops that Bradley would accept. Parks's Headquarters Diary shows that Brereton spent more time planning for his move to Paris, and more time away from the headquarters during the MARKET mounting period, than he did considering operational considerations for what would be the largest airborne operation in history. With air support allegedly coordinated by AEAF and Leigh Mallory, with Williams and Hollinghurst picking drop zones, timings, and routes, and with the Army commanders attempting to fit a ground scheme of maneuver to match a procrustean bed of aerial delivery requirements,

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[872] See Chapter Four.

[873] Davis, *Spaatz and the Air War*, 219. Williams had been an aggressive Air Command Commander in Tunisia. Spaatz punished his support of the Army by banishing him to transports.

Brereton's real influence in shaping MARKET was marginalized, and his actual conduct in running it was at times nonexistent. GARDEN and its relationship to MARKET's objectives held no interest for him; as "Airborne Army Commander" he never even attended the commanders' meeting chaired by Browning on 16 September to discuss the ground plan and final requirement for the operation.[875]

Yet Brereton's role as "Army" commander was predicated on the fact that he, as an experienced tactical airman, could combine close air support and ground operations, a claim he himself had made strenuously to Eisenhower in July when he attempted to create an airborne army within his own Ninth Air Force. This was especially crucial considering the inherent weaknesses of the airborne; their lack of firepower, heavy weapons, antitank capability, and self-mobility on the ground meant that their status as a surprise threat to the enemy could rapidly shift to that of an immobile force imperiled. Until ground forces closed with and relieved the airborne, the tactical air forces were their only method of combat support, not simply an agency for resupply as seen at First Allied Airborne Army. That Brereton was not operating closely and personally with both Leigh Mallory and Coningham, in whose sector MARKET would occur, demonstrated negligence on his part. That Tedder, Eisenhower's "senior air officer" for the theater, was also absent from key conferences and did nothing to assure smooth and maximum support for MARKET GARDEN, particularly when weather snags and communications difficulties plagued the entire

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[874] He did visit Dempsey after the operation began.

[875] Brereton's ignorance of Army operations was a matter of attitude, not training. He had graduated from the Army Command and General Staff School and had served there as an instructor. In World War I, he commanded an observation squadron supporting the Army and had been General William "Billy" Mitchell's G-3 during the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

nine days of operations, demonstrates his true "worth" as Deputy Supreme Commander.

While biographers and this author have attempted to provide some insight into the personalities involved, it should be remembered that senior commanders are genuinely strong personalities, and reach the top of their profession by performance. not personality. The chemistry of Eisenhower's command had been forced by the variables of the coalition, with multiple services nominating individuals and countries accepting "champions" who, in the circumstances, often seemed ill-suited to the problems of coalition cooperation. For Northwest Europe, however, the great influence was the campaign plan. Once initiated, it locked services and personalities into a course of action which, while seemingly uncoordinated or often diverged from, kept a general line of operations, however inefficient, until the situation required a major course change.

Neither Eisenhower nor Montgomery selected Normandy, and though both men can claim authorship of parts of the NEPTUNE plan, the first "original plan" in either man's term of command was the post-OVERLORD campaign that began in late August when the lodgement area had been filled out. Two components dominated both men's thinking; it was their diverging priorities over these issues that sparked debate over the campaign plan and the subsequent conduct of the war.

The first component was the ground, seen from both operational and strategic perspectives. Both men recognized the role of avenues of approach and the value of what Jomini had described as "strategic coup d'oeil." While any serious student of Europe's military geography would have immediately seen the value of the northern

approach, only those thinking in terms of past, horsed armies would have accepted the southern gateway through Metz as a viable alternative. That SHAEF's planners stretched their estimate, and downplayed the value of a campaign within Germany, had to have been politically inspired, not merely based on a military estimate. Moreover, two significant differences existed in Montgomery's and Eisenhower's thinking. Montgomery correctly ascribed his northern concentration as a "Schlieffen Plan in reverse," a complete one-movement operation designed to carry until victory, whereas Eisenhower had assumed his operation would pause, possibly for a month or two. Montgomery's strategy was totally offensive and reliant upon concentration of forces, supplies, and effort, with forces that were unsupportable falling into flank guard or reserve status. Eisenhower's idea of stretching the enemy assumed that the Allies would not have the initiative, nor would they achieve a superiority of forces at the critical point, instead providing a defensive stance as they moved and fighting the enemy on near-even terms. Montgomery's plan was for a death blow; Eisenhower's was an attrition strategy designed to kill the German army one unit at a time.

Montgomery believed in operational concentration, as did the Red Army, the German Army, indeed every major Western military force of the time; only the Americans eschewed it at the operational level. Eisenhower's strategy was, at face value, designed to split the Allies into the "Channels" that he described in his appreciation on Supreme Command, but it ignored the great fact that the second smallest army group was on the key avenue of approach and had, with the Channel Coast, the largest open flank to clear. Torn by the politics of keeping Marshall, Stimson, and Bradley happy, Eisenhower had to react to the fact that the key

objectives—the Channel ports, Antwerp, and the Ruhr—were in Montgomery's sector. The mythology that Americans do not serve under foreigners, played up by Patton and Bradley, was constantly used at his back to force bad military decisions.[876] Instead of a good campaign somewhere, he had two bad campaigns, precisely as Montgomery charged in his postwar comments, a fact that transpired with the failure of MARKET GARDEN, the stalemate in the Aachen Corridor, and the bitter fall campaign in Metz and Lorraine.

At the operational level, the most essential element after concentration that had characterized Montgomery's campaigns since Alam Halfa in 1942 was careful and thoughtful planning. British respect for "battle procedure,"—the necessary planning, organization, reconnaissance and staging of men, equipment, ammunition, and the detailed briefing and rehearsal that preceded battle—had caused Monty to be called "cautious" by his enemies, but had been instrumental in diminishing casualties as well as maximizing the possibility for success. It also had encouraged the use of "limited objectives" to minimize risk, a less fluid approach that unfortunately favored an enemy keen at rapid shifting of reserves and the seizure of local opportunities. Late August 1944 had shown that British forces, mainly 30 Corps, could pursue and harry an enemy well as their American cousins.

MARKET GARDEN, however, was a significant departure from the form previously seen by Second Army. NEPTUNE had permitted four months of detailed

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[876] During World War I, the US II Corps was formed and never served a day under US command. It served under British command. Separate divisions also served with the French until a large enough force to constitute an American army was formed. As if to follow their unwanted heritage, II Corps served in the British First Army in Tunisia under Fredendall, and then in Alexander's 18th Army Group, under Patton, and then Bradley.

planning and rehearsal; its airborne portion had been under study from the beginning of the COSSAC period, though Gale's division was not formally given orders until February 1944. The crucial coup de main at the Orne River (Pegasus) bridge had benefited from months of planning, training, and rehearsal, and the actual objective was known to the commander more than a month before D-Day. MARKET had benefited from the practice and planning of a number of operations, and Second Army and 30 Corps had been in constant combat since June and were well practiced at cobbling together operations, sometimes under fire. MARKET GARDEN, therefore, was not the product of inexperience, though First Allied Airborne Army, 1 Airborne Corps and 1 Airborne Division had yet to be tested under fire in 1944. Given the time from COMET's alert, 1 Airborne had 13 days of preparation and the two American divisions, seven.

Montgomery's orders, as always, had been verbal. Dempsey and Browning had spoken to the Army Group commander, and were certain of his intentions and conversant with the "assumptions" that underlay his plan. It was their job to assure that their detailed plans accomplished his intention, and if the assumptions that underlay the plan had changed such that mission accomplishment was jeopardized, that they adapt their plans for success or cancel them and request new orders.

COMET had implied several basic assumptions reflecting the enemy situation as it was understood on 3 September: that the enemy would not be able to form a coherent front and strong defensive blocks en route to the Rhine bridges, that 30 Corps would be able to rush the small bridges ranging from Eindhoven to Veghel, and that the airborne would seize the large and irreplaceable bridges at Grave, Nijmegen,

and Arnhem in coup-de-main operations rapidly reinforced by brigade-sized elements. The plan itself accommodated these assumptions. By beginning at Eindhoven, the quick linkup needed to reach the first bridge would be a dash of roughly 30 miles through "negligible resistance," a feat that had been done recently by the Household Cavalry and all the fighting elements of the Guards Armoured Division. Flak, it was felt, would be negligible in the target areas; weather would be sufficient for close air support and the delivery of four lifts in two days; and within several days, the air-portable 52d (Lowland) division would be flown in to Deelen airfield, north of Arnhem.[877]

Stiffening resistance south of Eindhoven, the spectre of tens of thousands of escaping Germans moving north of the Scheldt, and hence available for counterattack north of the Neder Rijn, and the increased danger from V-missile sites to the United Kingdom, caused a major restructuring of COMET. The new plan substituted new assumptions: that increased force would push through or break the enemy "crust" forming, and that it would be able to provide adequate flank protection. The increased airborne strength would permit a virtual "passage" of the attacking force for most of the depth of the attack and would permit control of divisional sectors and the vital ground along the route; surprise parachute drops or glider assaults next to the key bridges would permit the surprise capture of and total control over every bridged water course in the division sector; and the last major bridge along the route would be reached in two to five days. Enemy reserves, absent the far objective area, would not arrive prior to the ground elements of 30 Corps.

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[877] A detailed discussion of the air and ground plan for COMET is in Chapter Eight.

The new plan, as approved, was supposed to reflect these assumptions. The new tasks, as approved by Dempsey and as outlined for MARKET, accommodated these. Thus, in Browning's briefing, MARKET, the airborne phase, would be increased by adding two additional airborne divisions, and what had been seen as a 30-mile rush to link up would be replaced by a seven-mile-deep attack with heavy artillery and air support. The ground attack would be three divisions wide, with a full corps in column. The "linking force" among the assaulting airborne divisions would be passed over roads controlled by the airborne for 46 miles of the route. Most important, the airborne lift would take place in double lifts per day over two days, surprise at the bridges would be by coup de main, and weather and flak would not pose problems. In addition to tactical surprise, both COMET and MARKET GARDEN assumed not simply air superiority, but that the US First Army's thrust to Cologne and Bonn would have drawn enemy reserves, most particularly the armored reserves known to be south of Aachen.

Most significant in both cases, it was assumed that the operation could be executed in a short amount of time—36–48 hours after adoption of COMET and within 48–120 hours of adoption of MARKET—to preclude substantial enemy reinforcement. Also implied was the assumption that significant enemy reserves would not be positioned in depth throughout the route, or near the major bridges.

Montgomery was said to have first seen the final plan on 15 September. If this is true, he would have discovered two key items were missing from his "intentions" as described to Dempsey: that the coup-de-main missions for the large bridges had been abandoned in each division area; that the "stair carpets" that would provide 30 Corps a

quick passage over most of the route had been abandoned south of Zon, in the area where enemy reserves for the crust would be most likely to be located; and that the corridor through the island would have its bridges open for enemy movement until both the Nijmegen and Arnhem bridges were captured. While the three-division-wide attack was still scheduled, it began to look as if logistics might force it to be staggered, with 8 Corps being the last to put in their attack. Moreover, the increasing flak rir:gs around the target areas would require a daylight preparation, putting back the time of the drop and hence cutting the available daylight for 30 Corps' drive, which would be a daylight-only attack. Moreover, with one lift per day, and not two as in COMET, the full airborne force would not be in their areas until D+3. From an operational perspective, the flank support by the First US Army grew more tenuous daily in the Aachen-Stolberg corridors, and few enemy reserves were being drawn off from Holland.

Given the change in both the plan and its acceptable assumptions, did intelligence justify its execution? While much has been said about ULTRA's warnings, the Dutch Resistance, and aerial photography, what exactly did Montgomery know on the eve of battle? After the war, his intelligence officer stated after the war the key to this dilemma in an interview. The historian's notes are reproduced below:

> We knew that the 10 SS Pz was in the rest area around Arnhem. But we knew their state had been bad. Didn't know how much they picked up. They had crawled across the Seine. We didn't know they had recuperated. SHAEF, 1st Army and [he] thinks that 30 Corps knew (30 Corps not on ULTRA, but thinks that the stuff was given to Bill Knowland anyway). However, the commander was not indoctrinated so he didn't know. Tony Tasker [FAAA] sent me a chaser saying he

had told A/B commander he didn't think 10 SS was there. My personal error was not in identification, but one of strength.[878]

In correspondence with Pogue, Williams added scattered comments on the draft of *The Supreme Command*, noting cryptically:

> We agreed 9 and 10 SS were there and Airborne Army knew (I asked Tony Tasker their G-2). What we didn't know was to what extent they had been replenished with tanks since crossing the Seine.

He noted further in the document,

> The *strength*, not the presence of II SS PZ K[orps] was the nasty surprise.[879]

Concerning Montgomery's use of G-2 estimates, Williams said:

> G2 estimates were not things M[onty] relied on, but rather oral testimony and the occasional special paper one wrote for his personal eye. I shouldn't think he read my Intelligence Reviews, for he had them summed up to him either by Joe Ewart (my representative at Tac. Hq.) or myself.[880]

Given that it is probable that only the G-2 at Monty's tactical headquarters would have briefed Montgomery, would he have stressed the possible location of "shells" or building divisions? Moreover, would Dutch information been passed to Montgomery? Monty appeared to have no love for the Dutch, or for Prince Bernhard (who was German), but would Williams have passed raw data from the resistance?

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[878] MHI, *Pogue Papers*, Brig. E.T. Williams interview with Forrest C. Pogue, May 30-31, 1947, 7. Note that Williams mentions ULTRA, which Pogue was not cleared to know about.

[879] NARA, RG 319, Supreme Command, Letter Williams to Pogue, 12-viii-51 [background papers of official historian].

[880] Ibid.; Letter Williams to Pogue, 10-viii-51. Of some note is that Strong, who allegedly warned about Arnhem, says nothing in correspondence to Pogue but is persistent in trying to establish that he had warned Bradley concerning the surprise attack in Ardennes. Moreover, Pogue is not much interested in intelligence "failure" at Arnhem, but is persistent in asking many questions about Strong's "warning" about Ardennes.

The official historian of the S.O.E. (Special Operations. Executive) suggests that any information would have held little credibility. Earlier in the war, the Germans had penetrated the Dutch Resistance turning a number of agents and wiping out S.O.E. teams that were dropped. The operations was called "North Pole." The official historian states:

> Chickens hatched during 'North Pole' came home to roost during 'Market Garden.' Such news about secret service affairs as filtered through to allied airborne forces' intelligence staff indicated that Dutch resistance had been penetrated by the enemy to a hopeless degree; so that any approach by men claiming to be Dutch resisters was liable to be treated with reserve, even suspicion. It was the task of the 'Jedburgh' teams to dispel suspicion and replace it with confidence-if they could.[881]

Certainly, no evidence of photo intelligence was passed higher to 21 Army Group by Browning's headquarters, and the fact remains that deep in the rear, some vehicles would have been expected to be found, and those seen by Urquhart were most probably half-tracks of Harzer's Group, not tanks, which did not appear for several days into the battle.

Besides a level of sophistication that failed to account for combat elements other than tanks, intelligence especially failed in two key elements of information: strengths and dispositions. None of these were offered. Montgomery summed his own beliefs:

> The 2nd S.S. Panzer Corps was refitting in the Arnhem area, having limped there. But we were wrong in supposing it could not fight

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[881] M.R.D. Foot, *SOE in the Low Countries* (London: St. Ermin's Press, 2001), 391-392. The "Jedburgh" teams were deployed during MARKET; there were none in Holland to report prior to the operation.

> effectively; its battle state was far beyond our expectation. It was quickly brought into action against the 1st Airborne Division.[882]

Given the imponderables, was the risk justified considering the information at hand? Montgomery had made similar risks both with 1 Airborne in Sicily and with the entire airborne effort in Normandy. It was known that the 91st Airlanding Division had moved into the Cotentin on top of 82d Airborne Division's drop zones, and he supported the drop slightly to the east on D-Day's eve. Moreover, with knowledge that 21 Panzer Division was within rapid motor-march distance of 6 Airborne's drop zones in Normandy, he likewise authorized their drop and later planned to drop 1 Airborne during WILD OATS in a more risky scheme that was overruled by Leigh Mallory.

More telling perhaps than his assessment of enemy strength possibilities is Montgomery's postmortem on the airborne plan.

> The airborne forces at Arnhem were dropped too far away from the vital objective—the bridge. It was some hours before they reached it. I take blame for this mistake. I should have ordered Second Army and I Airborne Corps to arrange that at least one complete Parachute Brigade was dropped quite close to the bridge, so that it could have been captured in a few minutes and its defence soundly organised with time to do so. I did not do so.[883]

Accepting that units were reforming in the battle area, with no strengths, organizational information, or dispositions perhaps justified taking a risk, but accepting the "no coup-de-main" plan demanded by the RAF and IX Troop Carrier and, in particular, Taylor's compact drop that eliminated the first "carpet" and bridge, increased the "risk" to the status of a "gamble."

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[882] Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 266.

[883] Ibid.

Certainly, the "drop zone geometry"—where the airborne landed—redefined the essence of the plan. In every case, the primary gift of an airborne operation—surprise—was lost due to the failure to land near or on objectives regardless of cost. Refusing to pay the price up front, the airborne paid a larger price later as the odds were turned against them by quick-reacting defenders, by weather that crippled both their reinforcement and air support, and by the fact that Club Route became a battle zone, not a short battle and a rapid exploitation route as conceptualized by Montgomery and Dempsey.

A German analysis, captured and quickly distributed among MARKET's numerous internal lessons sponsored by the various headquarters, noted the following:

> The enemy's chief mistake was not to have landed the entire First Airborne Division at once rather than over a period of 3 days and that a second airborne division was not dropped in the area west of Arnhem.[884]

The airmen themselves showed far less daring and even less imagination. Brereton and Williams should have been aware that the introduction of napalm, already used in some quantities in theater, would have been an ideal area "clearance" weapon and that parties of paratroops or the original glider parties should have been used to seize the bridge and freeze the combat area following such an attack. The fact that the airmen refused to countenance this showed their lack of understanding for, and concern about, the ground battle.[885] While Montgomery might be damned as a gambler, they proved unimaginative and more deadly to the plan. Nor was there much

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[884] NARA, RG 331, 1st AAA, German Analysis of ARNHEM, 18 December 1944.

[885] ETO Air Board, *Effectiveness of Third Phase Tactical Air Operations*, 138-156, 314-319; NARA, RG 18, 373.2b Support of Ground Operations, Headquarters, USSTAF, 10 December 1944, Eighth Air Force, Special Report of Operations in Support of First Allied Airborne Army Operations.

initiative shown as the battle failed. One wonders why bombers were not used to carpet-bomb the area immediately to the east of the Elst block. Leigh Mallory, already skewered by Tedder and Spaatz, might have proposed this, but both the tactical air forces and the strategic bombers were out of his hands. Tedder, the self-appointed Air Supremo, might have acted, but he was nowhere near the combat area. Concerning the tactical planning of air operations, Broadhurst commented:

> In the Normandy campaign, this was normally [done at] the Army/Tactical Group H.Q., although for small specialist operations it was often delegated to Corps H.Q. when a small team from the main H.Q. would be designated to sit in for the planning. Why Arnhem was treated so differently has never been exposed, but I imagine there were very strong political reasons for the decision.[886]

Broadhurst's frustration went beyond poor planning coordination. He related to the author,

> I also received this signal [relating to presence of Panzers near Arnhem at beginning of operation]. I immediately got on to my superior [Coningham, 2 TAF] headquarters asking permission to attack the Panzers with my rocket-firing Typhoons as they advanced toward Arnhem. I was virtually told to mind my own business and keep out of the area as the operation was being handled from England, and if they required assistance they would ask for it![887]

Broadhurst's comments extend further, to the realm of basic communications capabilities:

> I was completely flabbergasted at the time to find that an operation of that magnitude was laid on without any proper communications between the Airborne drop and the local Army/Air Headquarters.[888]

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[886] CAB 101/332, Harry Broadhurst Notes for Sir Ralph Cochrane, ibid., 6.

[887] Letter, Broadhurst to the author, 28 March 1991.

[888] Letter, Broadhurst to the author, 23 June 1991.

Brereton, declared the operation an "outstanding success," citing the large delivery figures and the low loss rates of aircraft and pilots. The ground battle, of course, was lost by Second Army's failure to expeditiously link up with 1 Airborne, a fact that he never considered as part of the drop plan itself. Complaining to Arnold, he made the following comments:

> I would like to present a few of the conditions which must be fulfilled to increase the chances of success of a large airborne operation. The first . . . "don't send a boy to do a man's job," "concentrate the maximum force on the principal objective." This sounds trite, but the ground force planners persist in presenting a multiple of objectives. An all-out effort with everything that can fly must take advantage of the initial surprise by dropping the maximum of supplies and reinforcements before the enemy can muster his air, flak, and ground defenses. All troop drops and landings from the outset must be in combat teams, no matter how small the combat team is.[889]

Arnold, frankly, thought that Brereton's Airborne Army had missed the major point of their existence:

> From the limited data available here, I would offer one conclusion on your initial operation which may bear on future plans. It appears that the success of the Air Commando operations in Burma and to some extent, the inability of your British First Airborne Division to achieve its objective, indicate that the key to success of large-scale airborne operations lies in the seizing of airfields or landing strips in the initial phases of such an operation. From this distant viewpoint, and at this time, I feel quite strongly that future airborne operations must be focussed about airbases if the air transported force is to remain active and effective. It seems clear that an airborne force cannot rely completely on the advance of any Ground Force.[890]

Horrocks and Browning have been damned for mistakes, but it is hard to fault either for decisions made with little information. Nor was Browning's insistence on

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[889] LC, *Papers of Henry H. Arnold*, Narrative of Operation Market, Dec 1944, 4, 6. Interestingly, it was Brereton who complained about the multiple combat teams for the Browning-planned 101st drop that would have placed the units on their objectives.

clearing the Groesbeek area and holding it incorrect. It saved the 82d and Club Route during the counterattacks and, given the rumors of tanks in Cleves, was probably a correct action. Browning's acceptance of the cancellation of the coup-de-main missions in the American sector may have been due to Taylor's protests and Brereton's failure to support him. He was not going to specify such tactics to the Americans. The 82d's commander was adamant in his claim that his men could have taken the Nijmegen bridge if permitted. This is a claim I do not accept. His force was too small to take the town from the south and still accomplish all his objectives. A battalion-sized drop north of the bridge might have worked, but a battalion was too small a force to take the town and the bridge from the south. More than size, it was a factor of timing. The 82d having failed to take the bridge at the outset, the very troops and vehicles that opposed the Allied assault on the twin bridges had been permitted to cross and fortify the town. The failure to pass the Guards Armoured expeditiously on 19 September, along with the failure to block both bridges from southern movement by the 10 SS in the first hours of the operation, doomed the 1 Airborne. Adair's statement concerning this is fair:

> My orders had said that the Nijmegen bridge would be in airborne hands by the time we reached it, and we would simply sweep on through.[891]

While the airborne criticized 30 Corps, its commander noted for the official historian his own views:

> I cannot see what I as a Corps Commander could have done more in order to speed up the advance. This criticism suggests that I sat all day

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[890] NARA, RG 18, 312.1-k Operations Letters, entry 294, Letter Arnold to Brereton, October 13, 1944.

[891] Adair, *A Guards' General*, 164.

in my Headquarters, when in point of fact I was out with the leading troops all day and every day, so I don't think you are being fair when you say this, but I blame myself very much for the mistake in tactics—I should have carried out a wide outflanking movement. Even so, 43 Division did not do so badly. . . .

We might have been able to relieve the 1st Airborne more quickly, but if we had reached the final objective allotted to us, the result might well have been disastrous, because we should not have been able to keep open our narrow L. of C.[892]

Browning's views concerning the Coup de main originally planned for COMET but not used in MARKET, were these:

> The chief reason why coup de main were not put in was because it was daylight. Coup de main by night, if carefully planned, did not give away the impending but major operation, whilst in daylight coup de main would almost certainly done so.[893]

He also expanded on this theme:

> The airborne objectives lay more or less in a strong belt of the flak defences of the Ruhr and the thickest part of this flak was at Arnhem and Nijmegen.
>
> The fighter cover available was sufficient to protect the fly in of the forces on the lines chosen, which would avoid flak as much as possible; but not sufficient for subsidiary lines for coup de main in addition.
>
> Normal sized coup de main parties would not have been strong enough to seize and hold the major bridges.[894]

While Montgomery and Horrocks are most connected with MARKET GARDEN's failure in some eyes, Dempsey's own comments to the official historian are telling:

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[892] CAB 101/332, Letter B. G. Horrocks to L.F. Ellis, 20 May 1966.

[893] CAB 106/1133, Letter F.A.M. Browning, 12 October 1954.

[894] CAB 106/1133, Letter F.A.M. Browning, 27 September 1954.

> The plan was mine. It was not perfect—few plans are—and in several ways a calculated risk was taken. We secured a good bridge-head at Nijmegen, and we failed to get the final objective, which was a good bridge-head at Arnhem. . . . The cutting of the road did have quite an effect on the development of our operations, and was a very good move by the Germans.[895]

MARKET GARDEN, while one of the most dramatic battles of the war, reflected the problems of conducting battle within a coalition. While Dempsey had made a 60-mile thrust into enemy territory, the operation failed either to gain the bridgehead desired, or to change Eisenhower's mind concerning concentrating on one main avenue. While MARKET GARDEN offered no proof that the war could have been won in 1944, it did underscore that the time to concentrate had long since passed, and that Eisenhower's decision, regardless of how he wavered in September, had been irrevocable. The plan for a concentrated thrust on the main avenue of approach, when offered in August, had already reached its "now or never" stage, and Eisenhower having failed to accept one avenue, the Broad Front became reality. Eisenhower had converted an operational opportunity into a tactical solution that failed. The Northwest Europe campaign would be an attrition campaign and it would be prolonged. Montgomery and Eisenhower would never agree on this decision, nor, in old age, even treat the issue rationally. The failure to accept his plan, Montgomery felt, had permitted the Germans to reform, rebuild, and launch the Ardennes offensive, and to eventually prolong the war at the cost of countless thousands of lives. While reaching Berlin was probably not possible, taking the Ruhr most certainly was, and I agree with Montgomery that Eisenhower's failure to try was a costly mistake.

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[895] CAB 101/332, Letter M.C. Dempsey to L.F. Ellis, 18 June 1962.

Montgomery had described the events as he saw them, in the Wellington Memorial Lecture given to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the birth of the first Duke of Wellington. During this lecture he said:

> There are three types of commanders in the higher grades:
>
> 1. Those who have faith and inspiration, but who lack the capacity for taking pains and preparing for every forseeable contingency which is the foundation of all success in war. These fail.
> 2. Those who possess the last named quality to a degree amounting to genius. Of this type I would name Wellington as the perfect example.
> 3. Those who possessing this quality, are inspired by a faith and conviction which enables them, when they have done everything possible in the way of preparation, and when the situation favours boldness, to throw their bonnet over the moon. There are moments in war when to win all, one has to do this.
>
> I believe such a moment occurred in August 1944 after the battle of Normandy had been won, and it was missed.[896]

Montgomery, as an operational commander, may have had a more clever plan, faith, inspiration and, indeed, conviction, but Eisenhower, as the Supreme Commander, possessed the only bonnet that could have flown over the moon.

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[896] Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Wellington Memorial Lecture, Journal of the Royal United Services Institution, Vol. CXIV, No. 656, 13.

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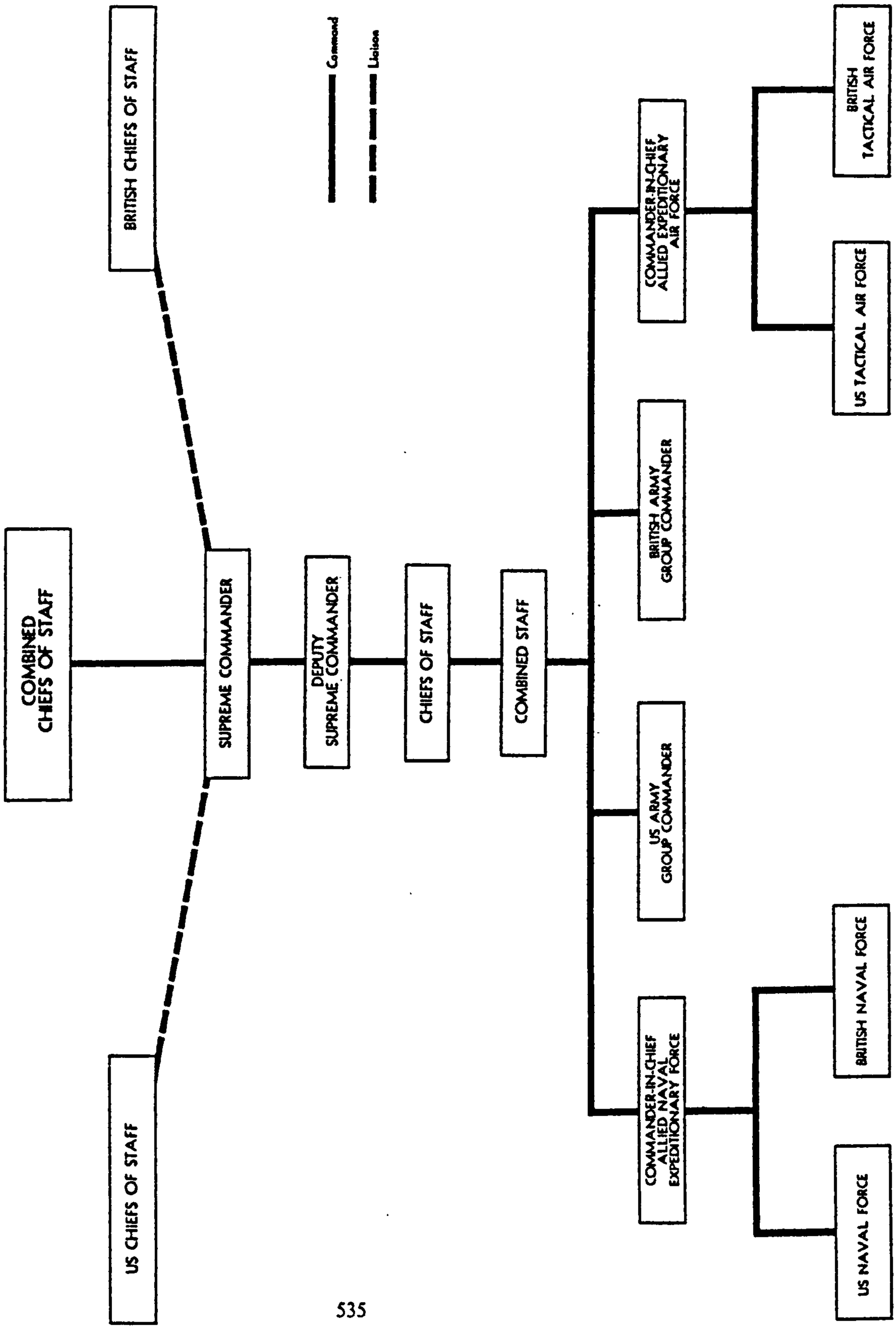

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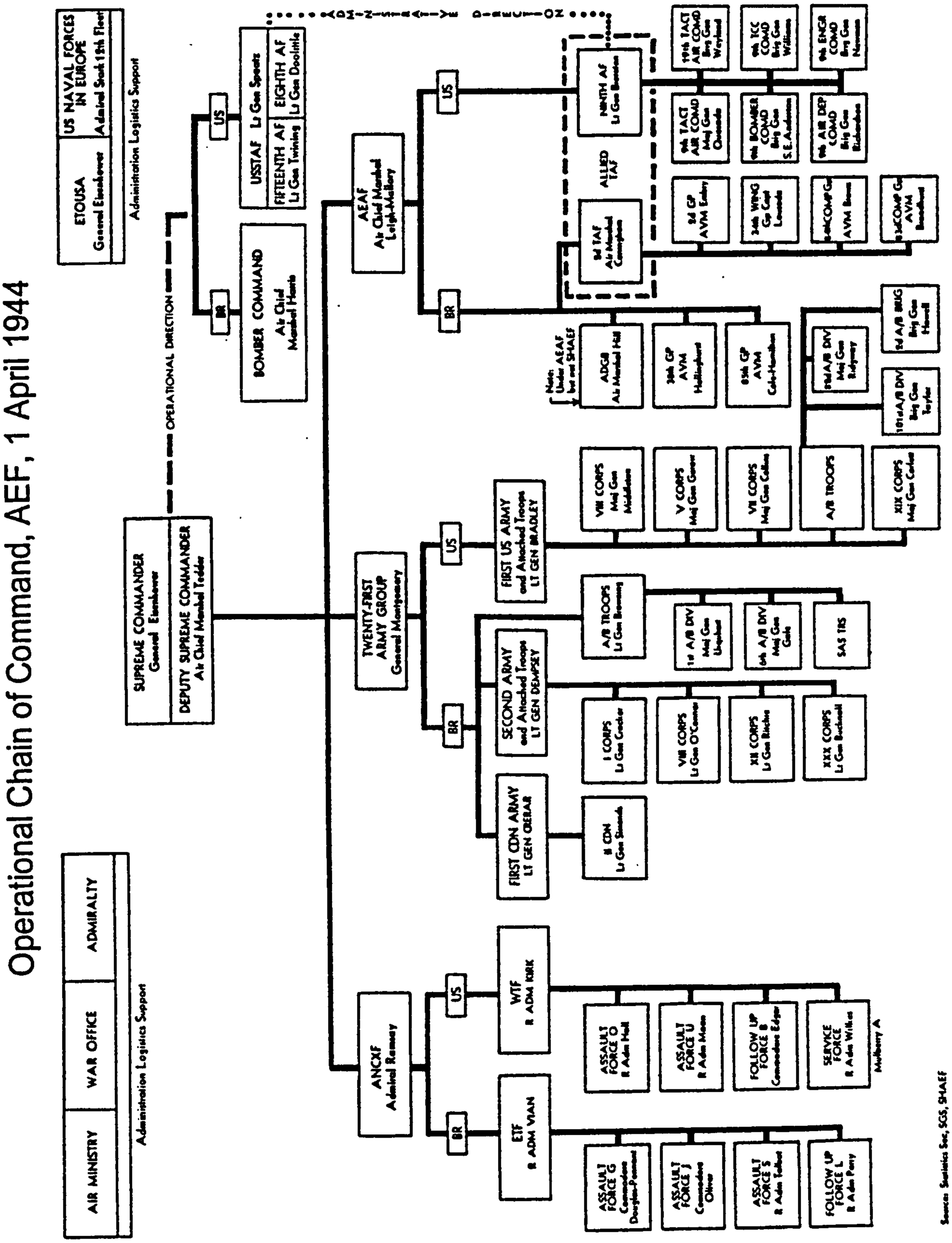

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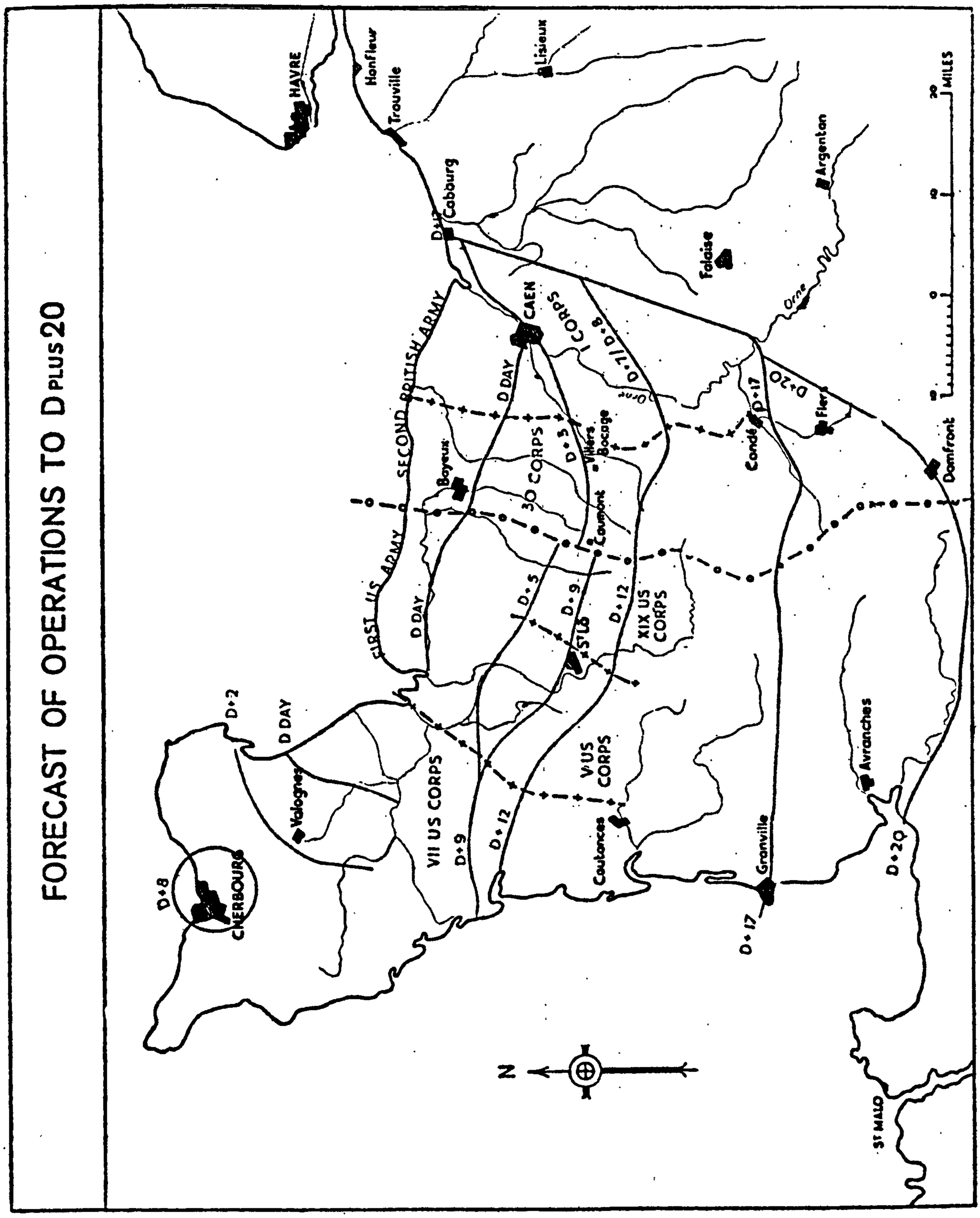

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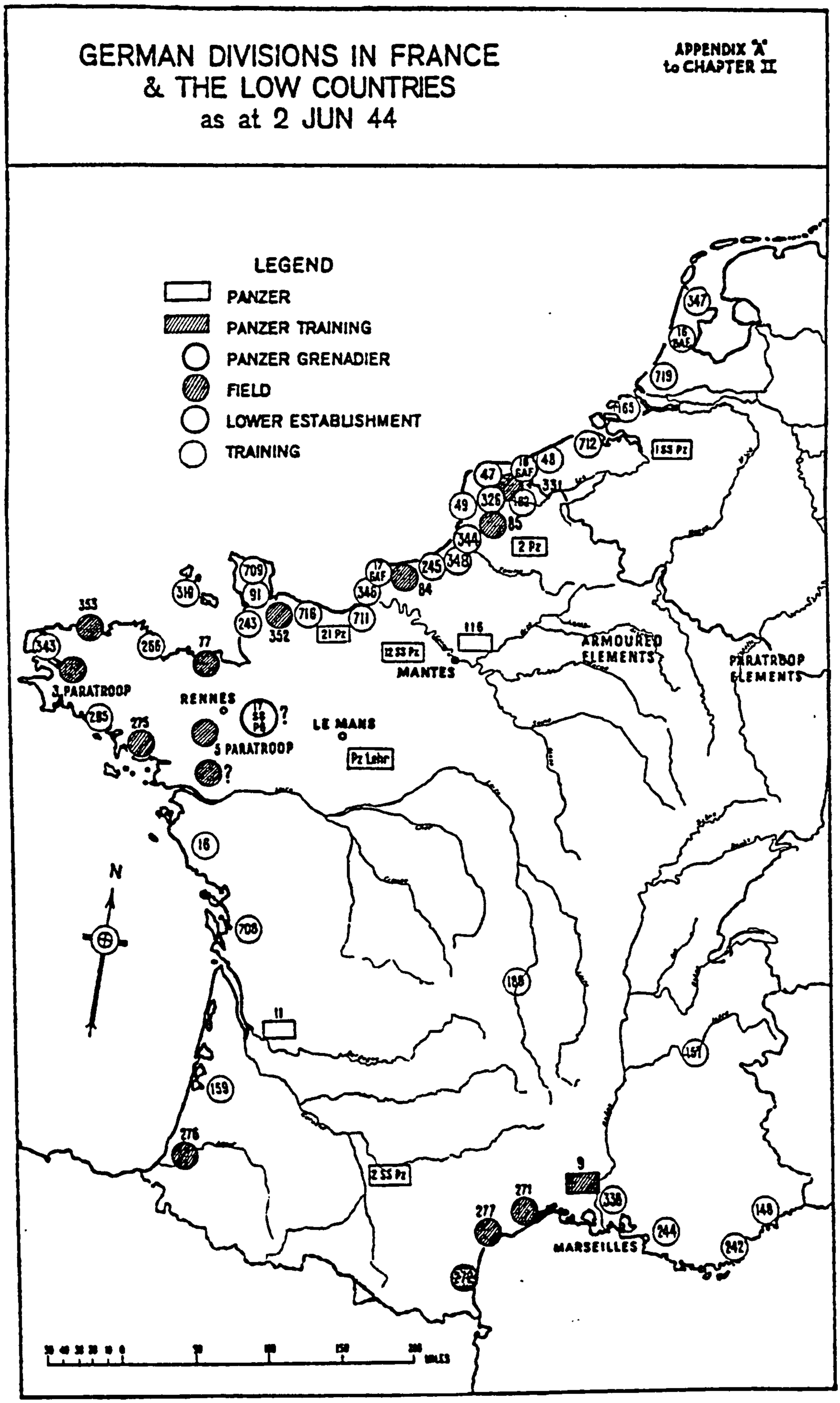

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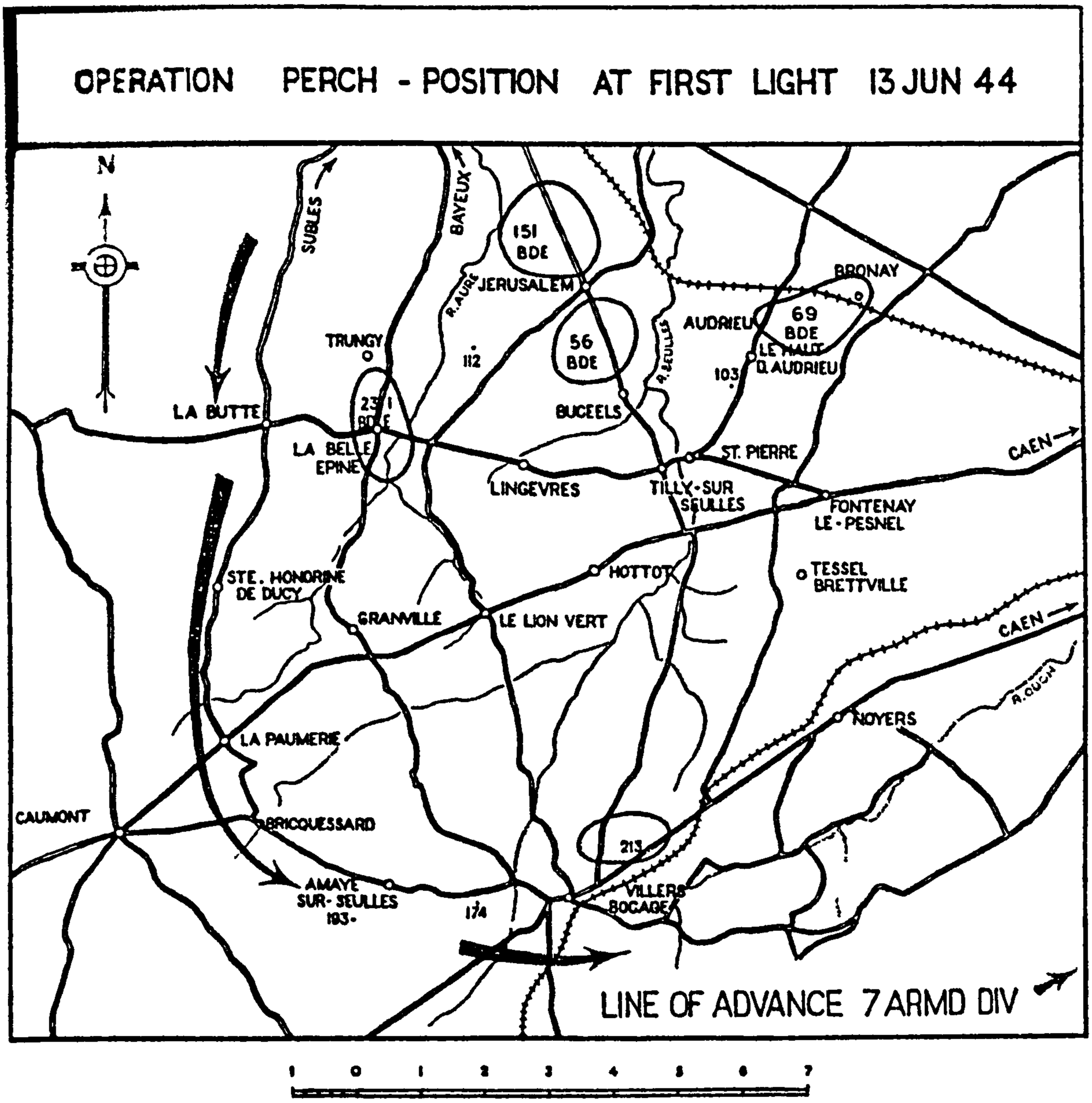

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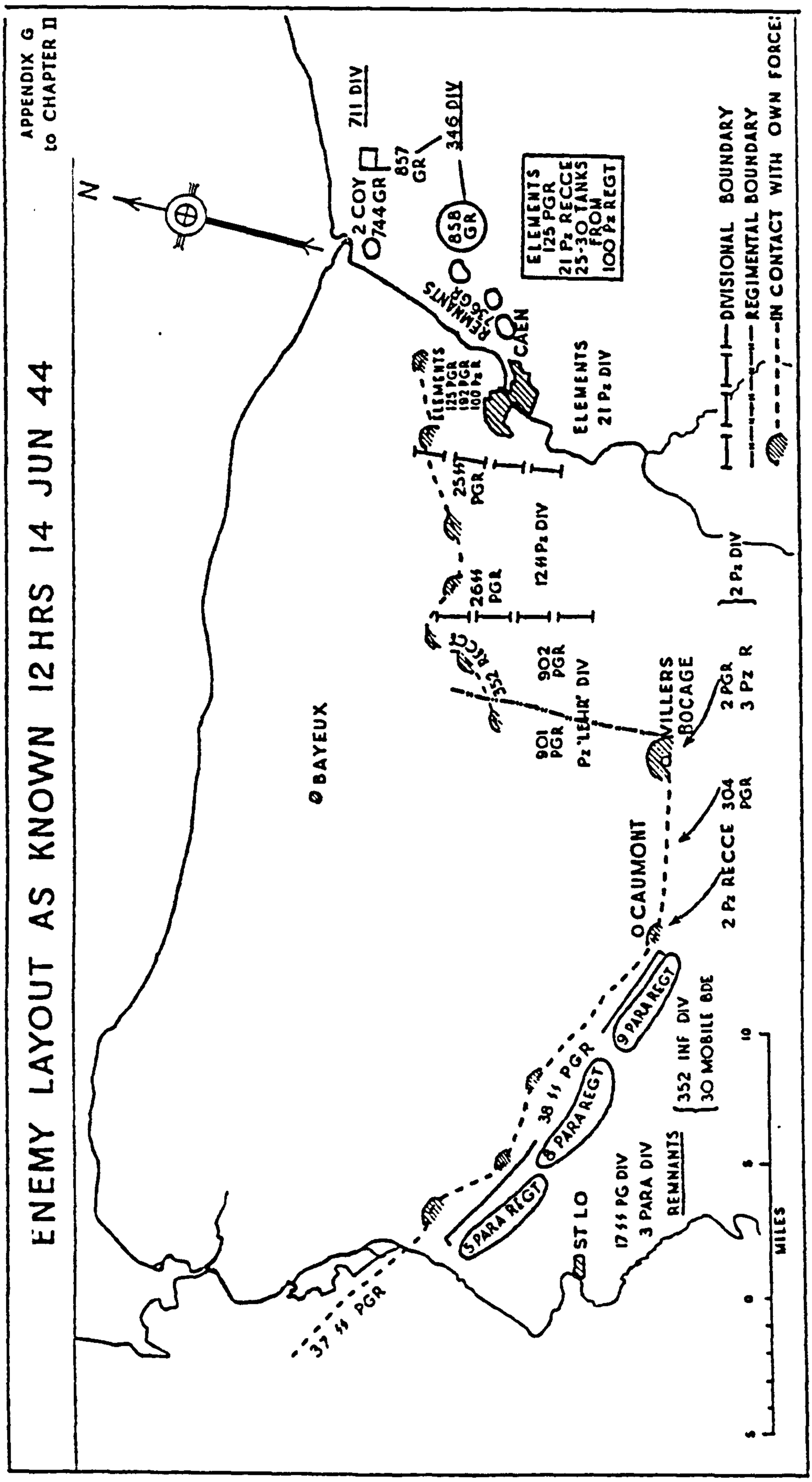

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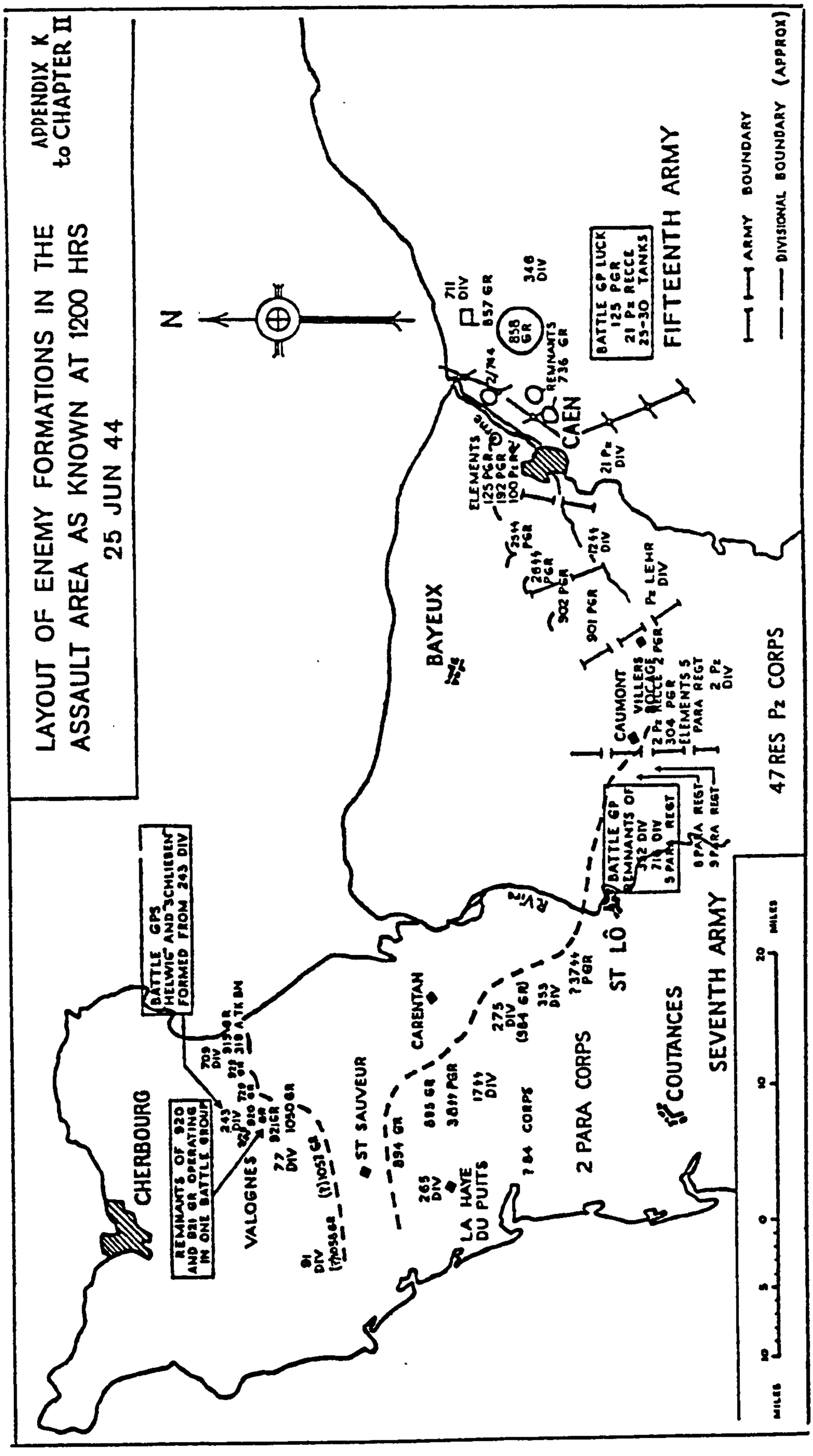

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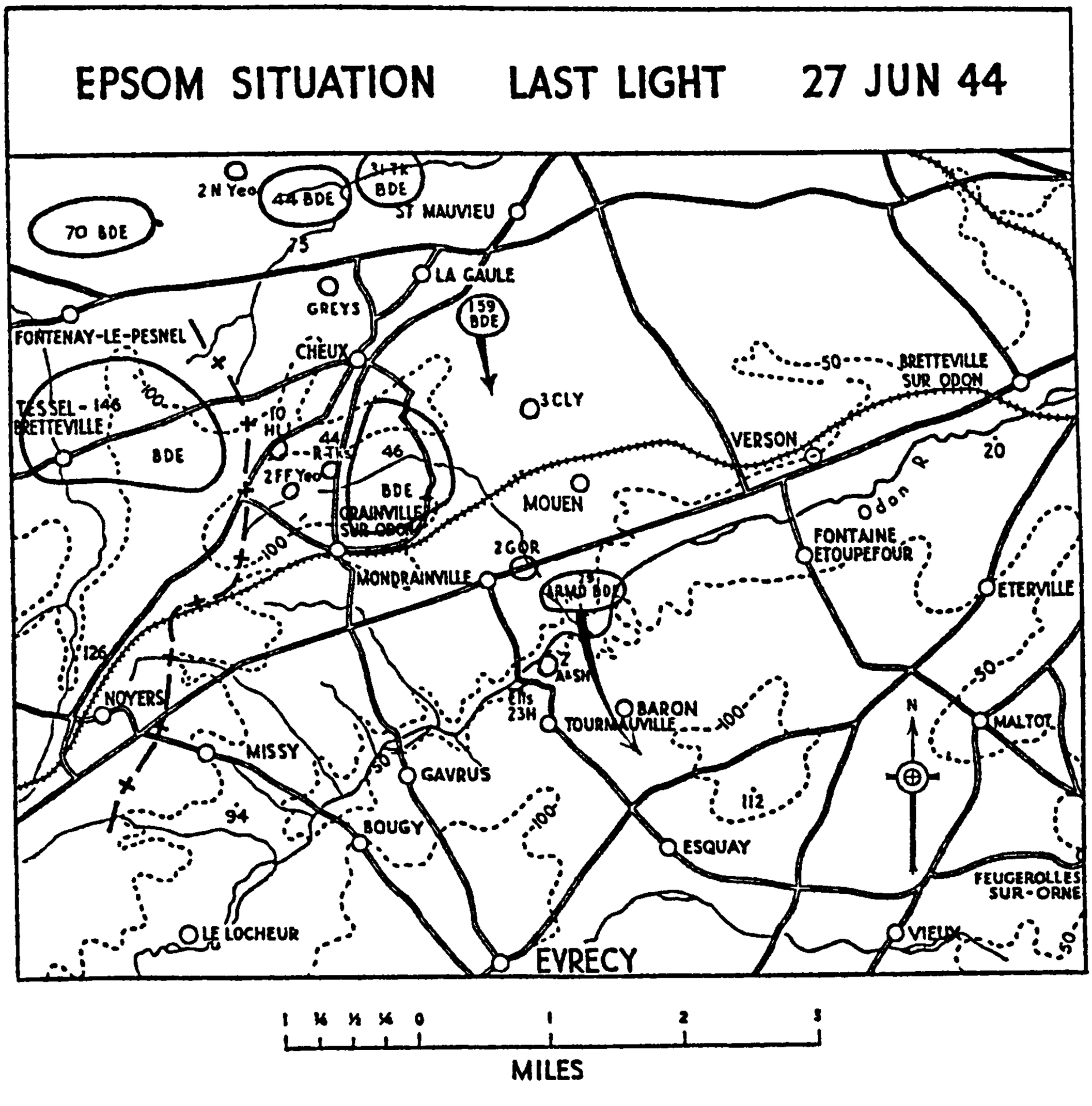

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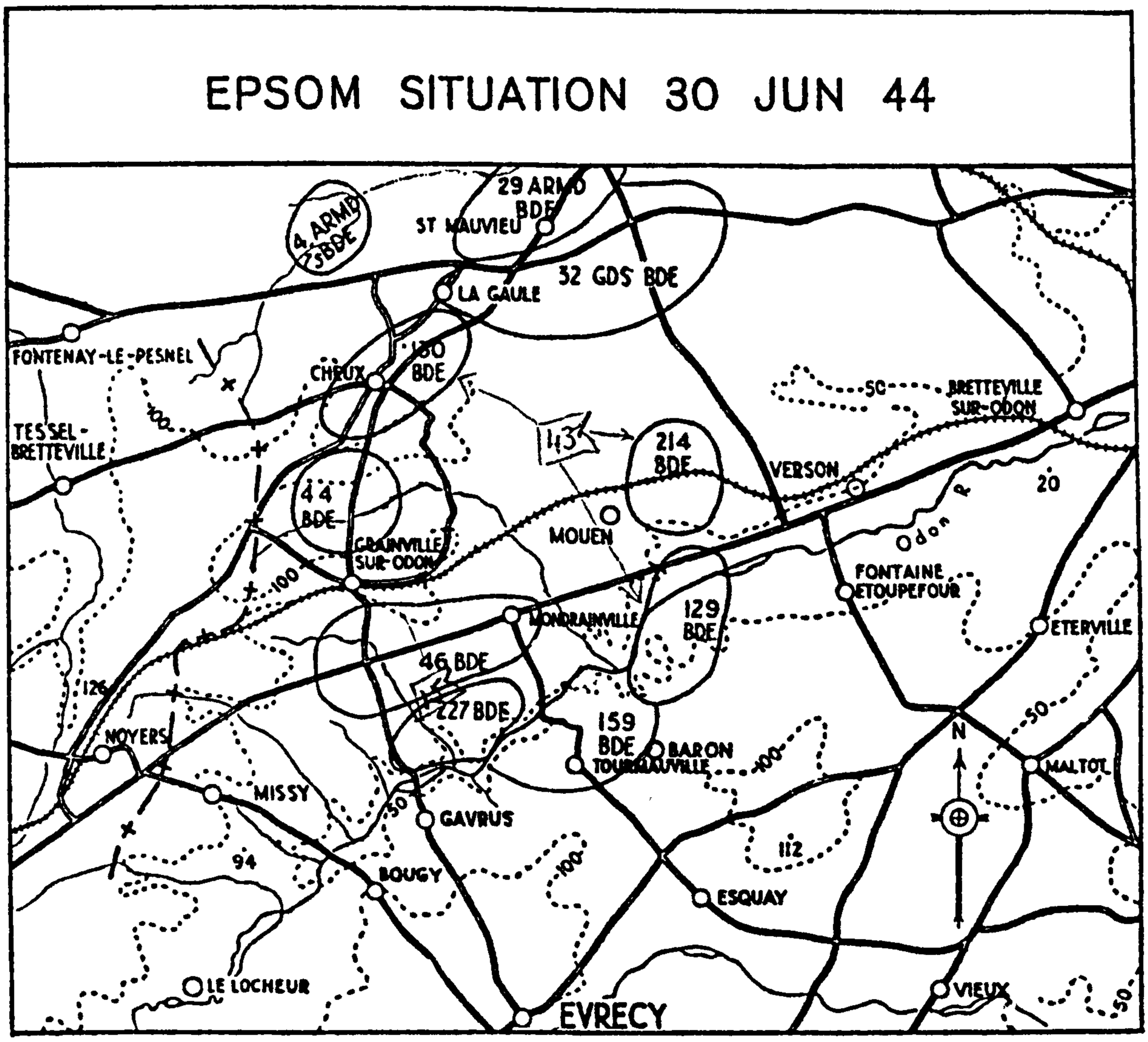

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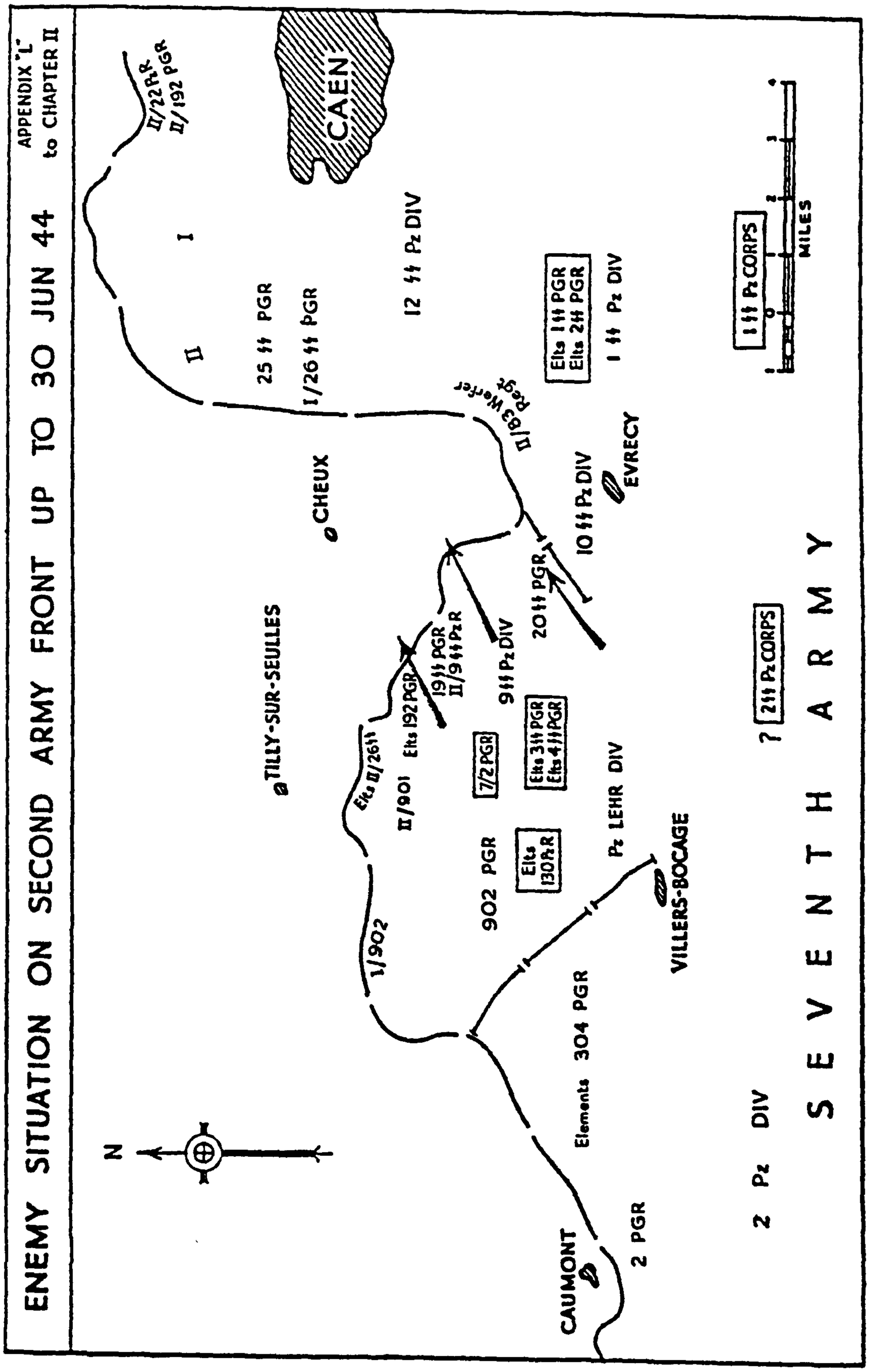

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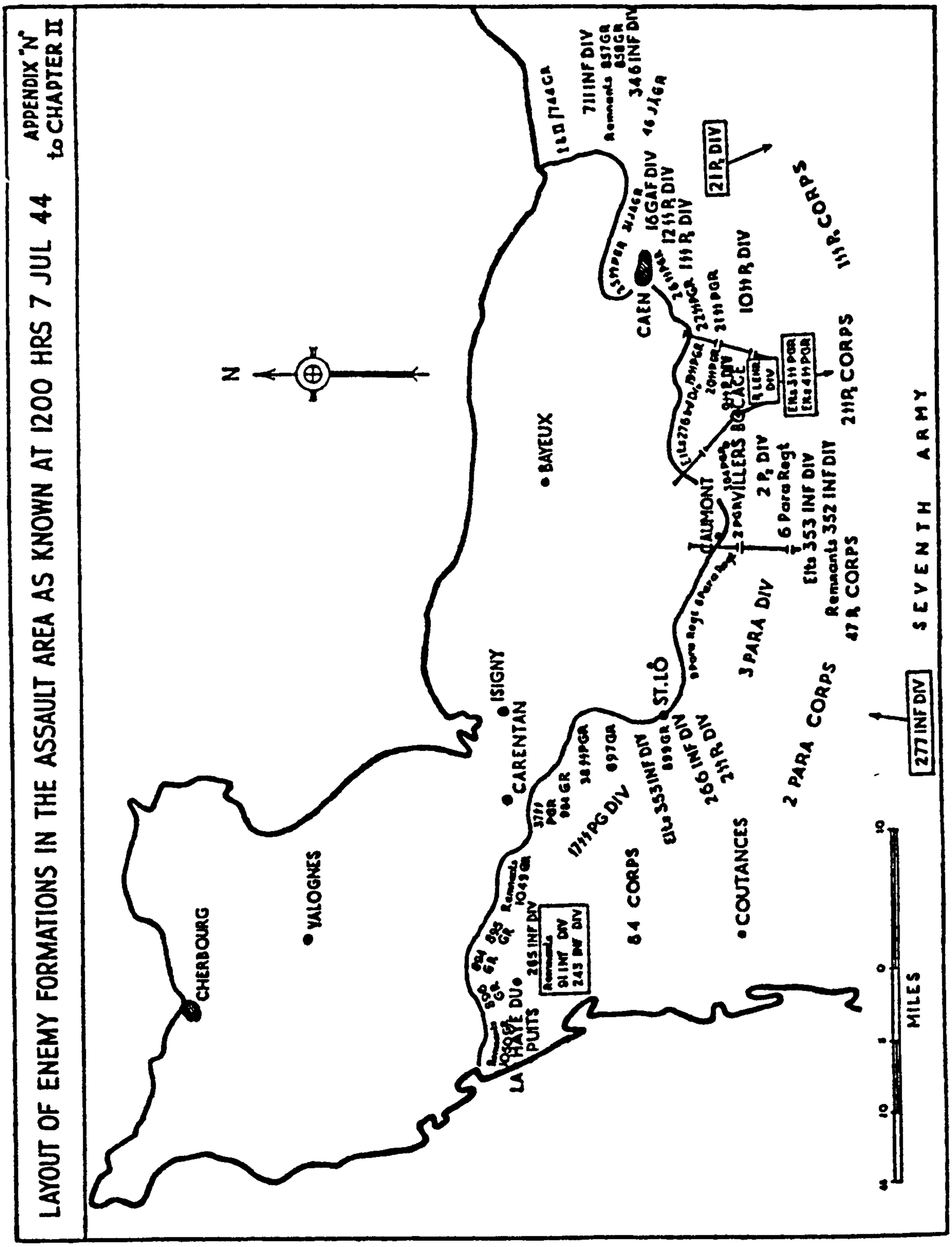

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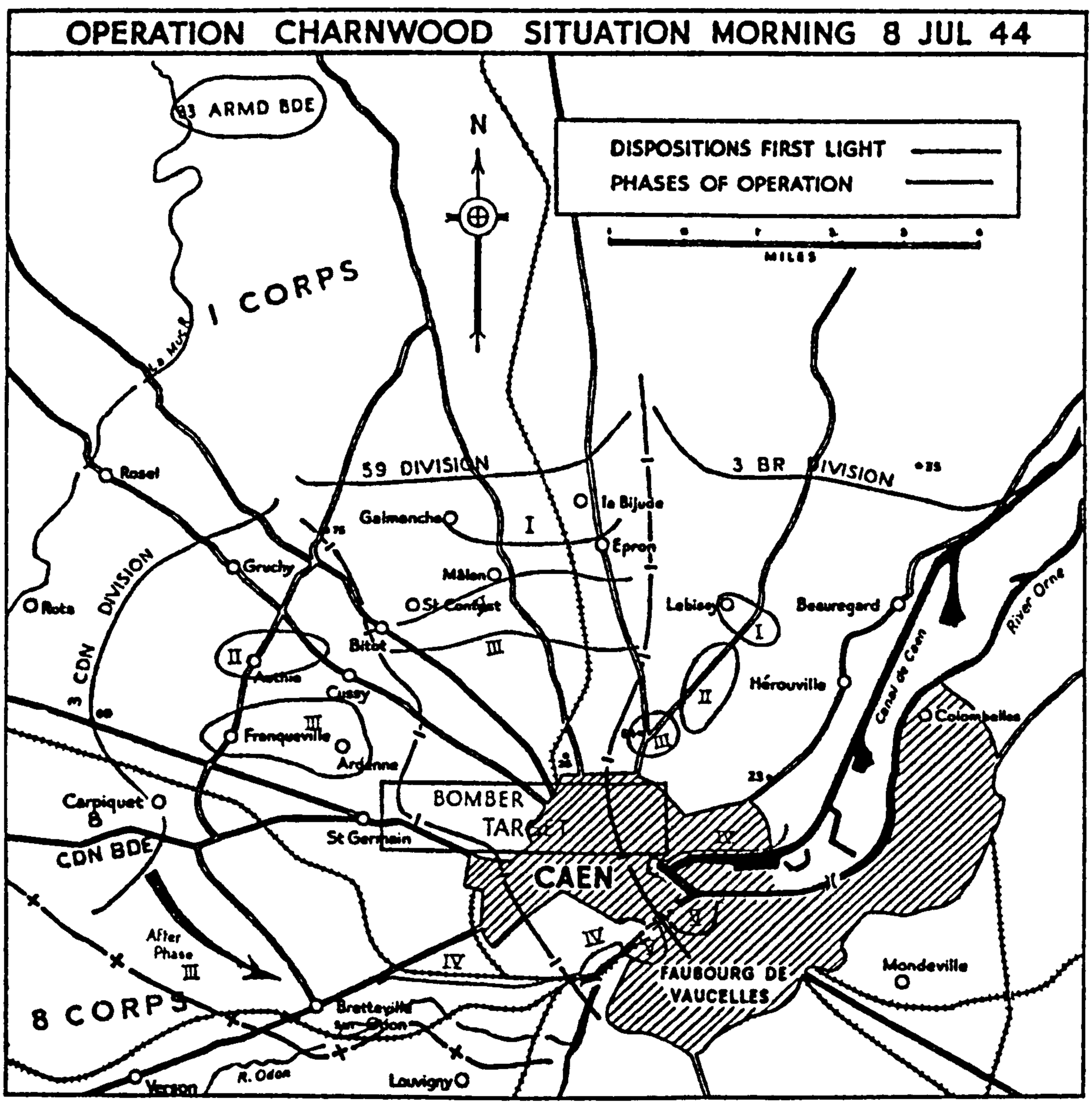

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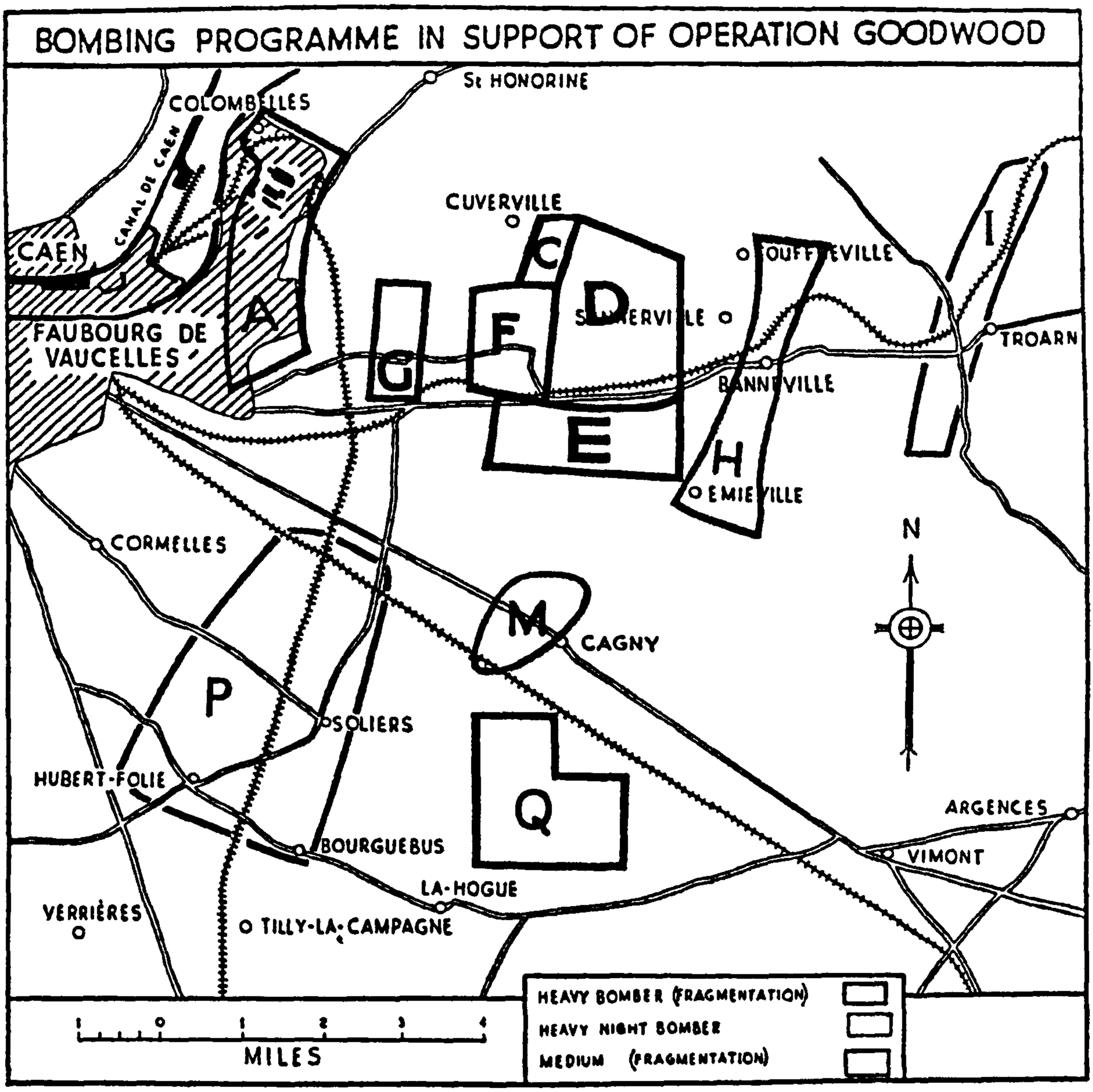

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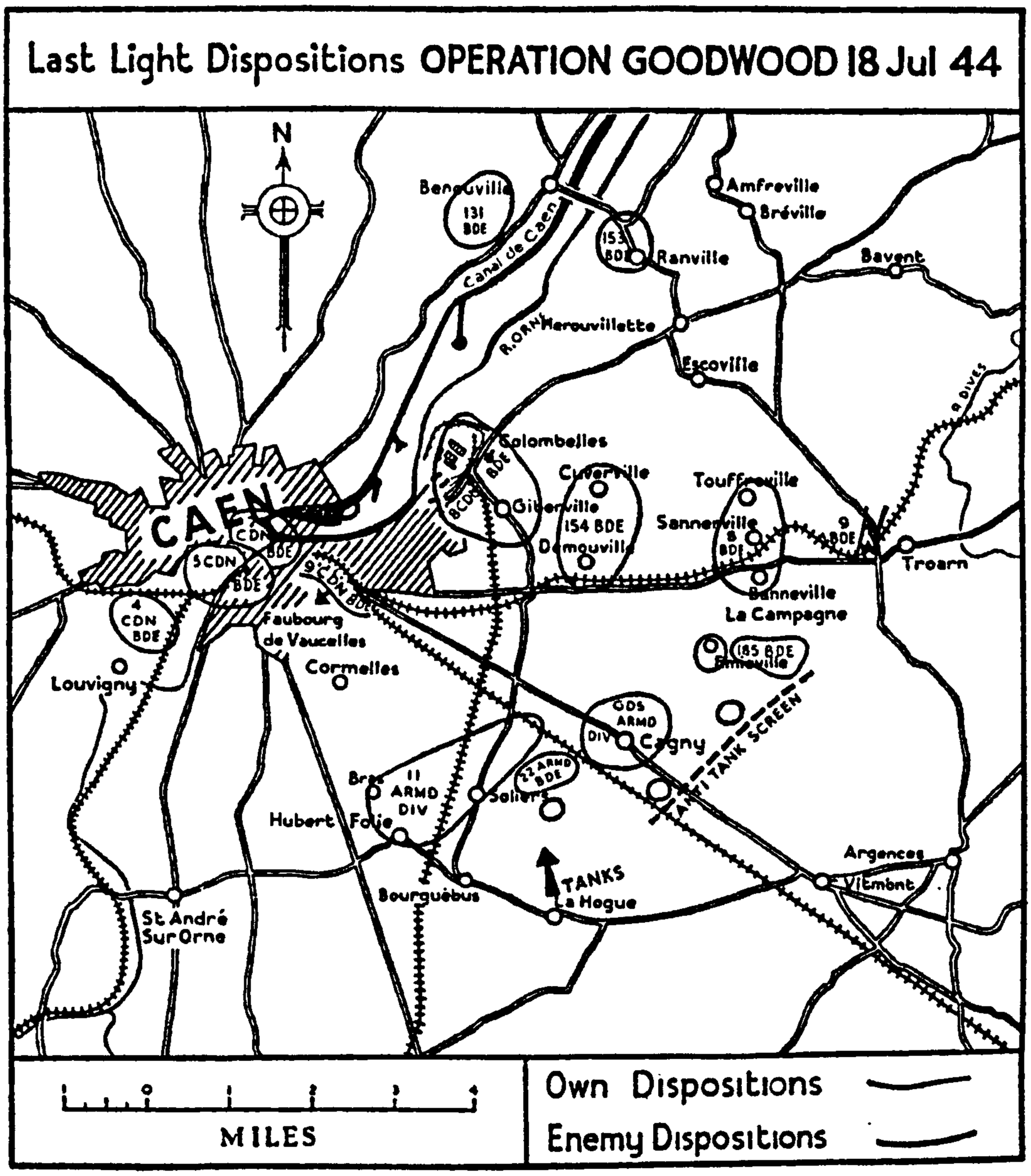

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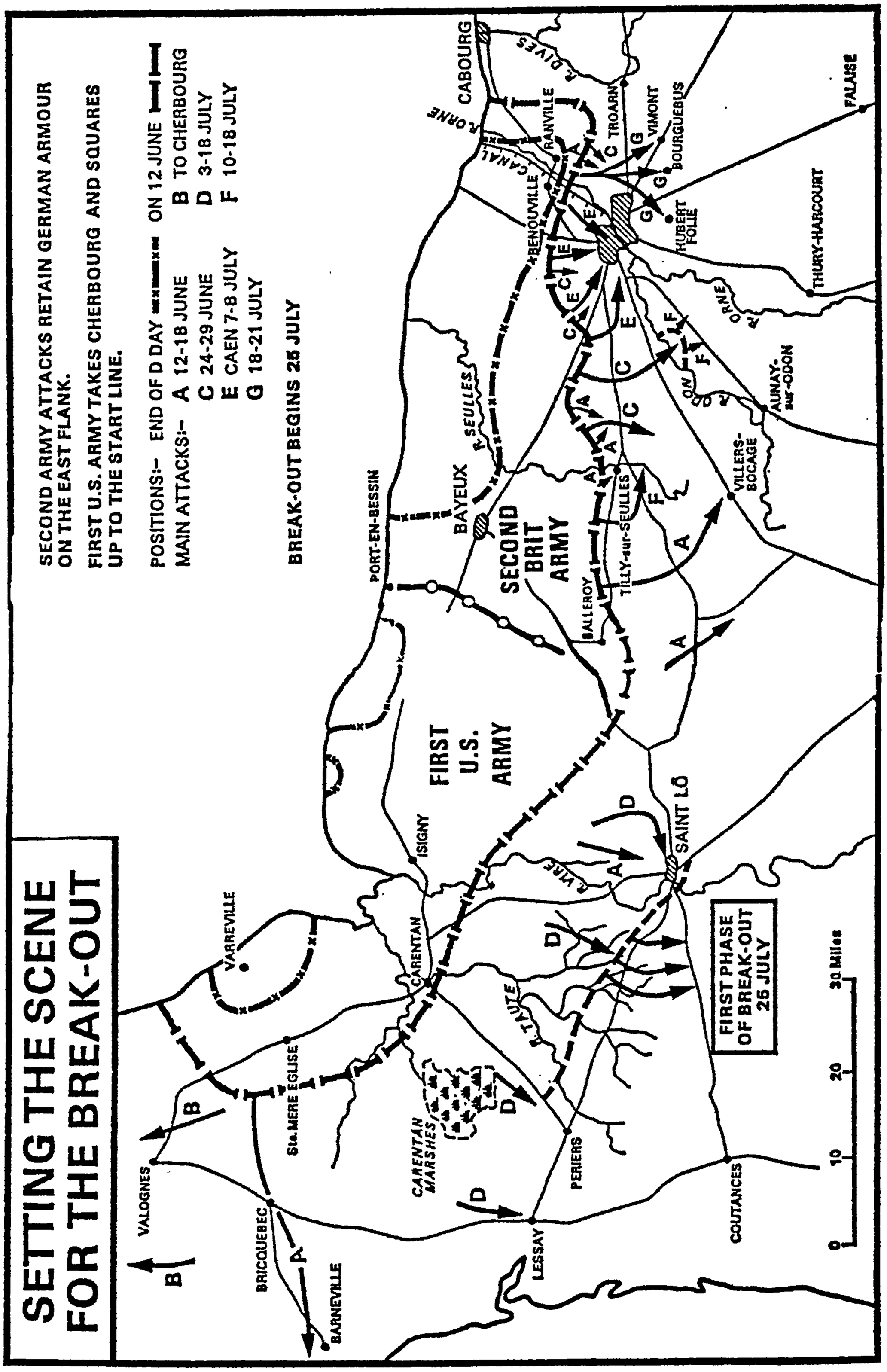

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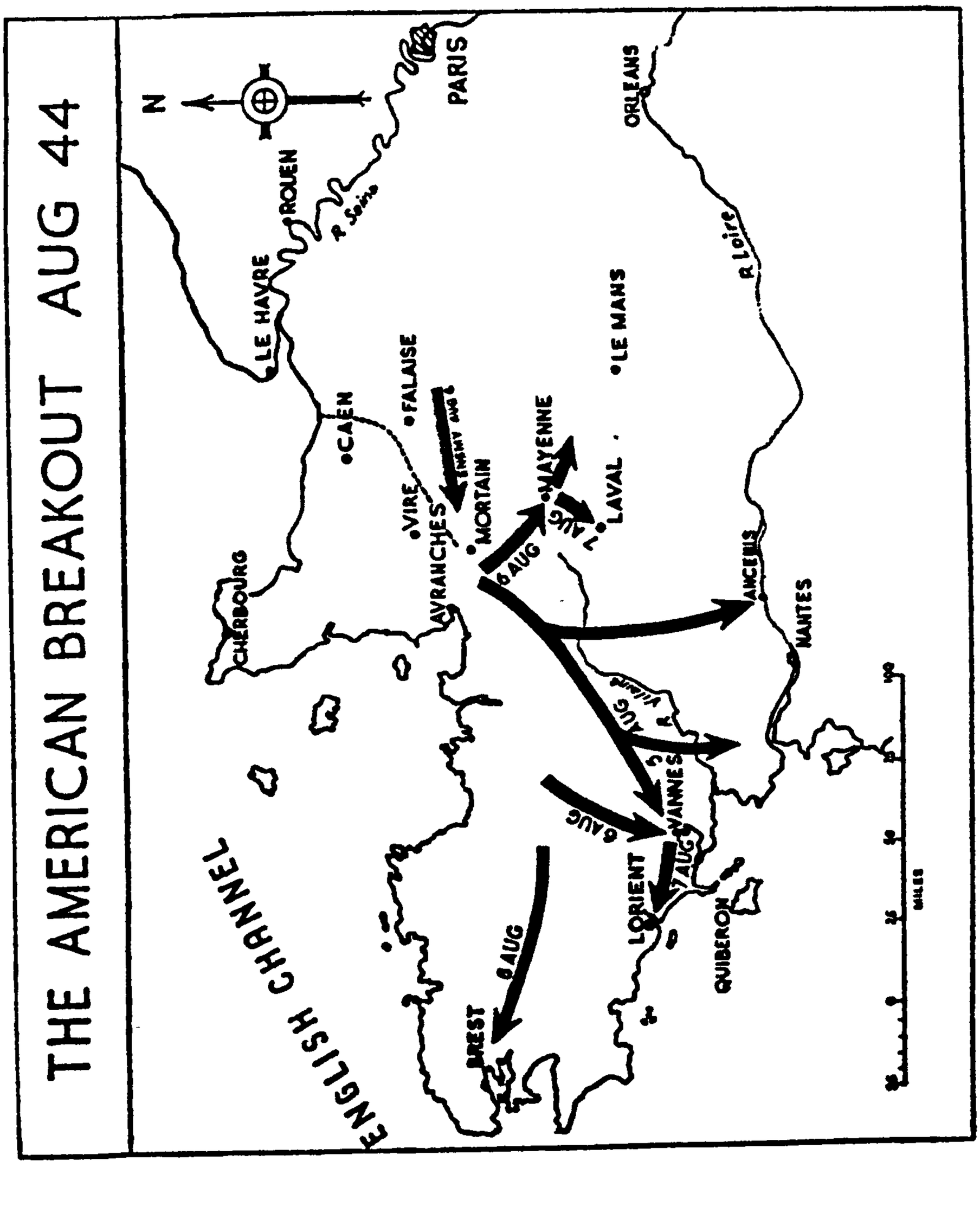

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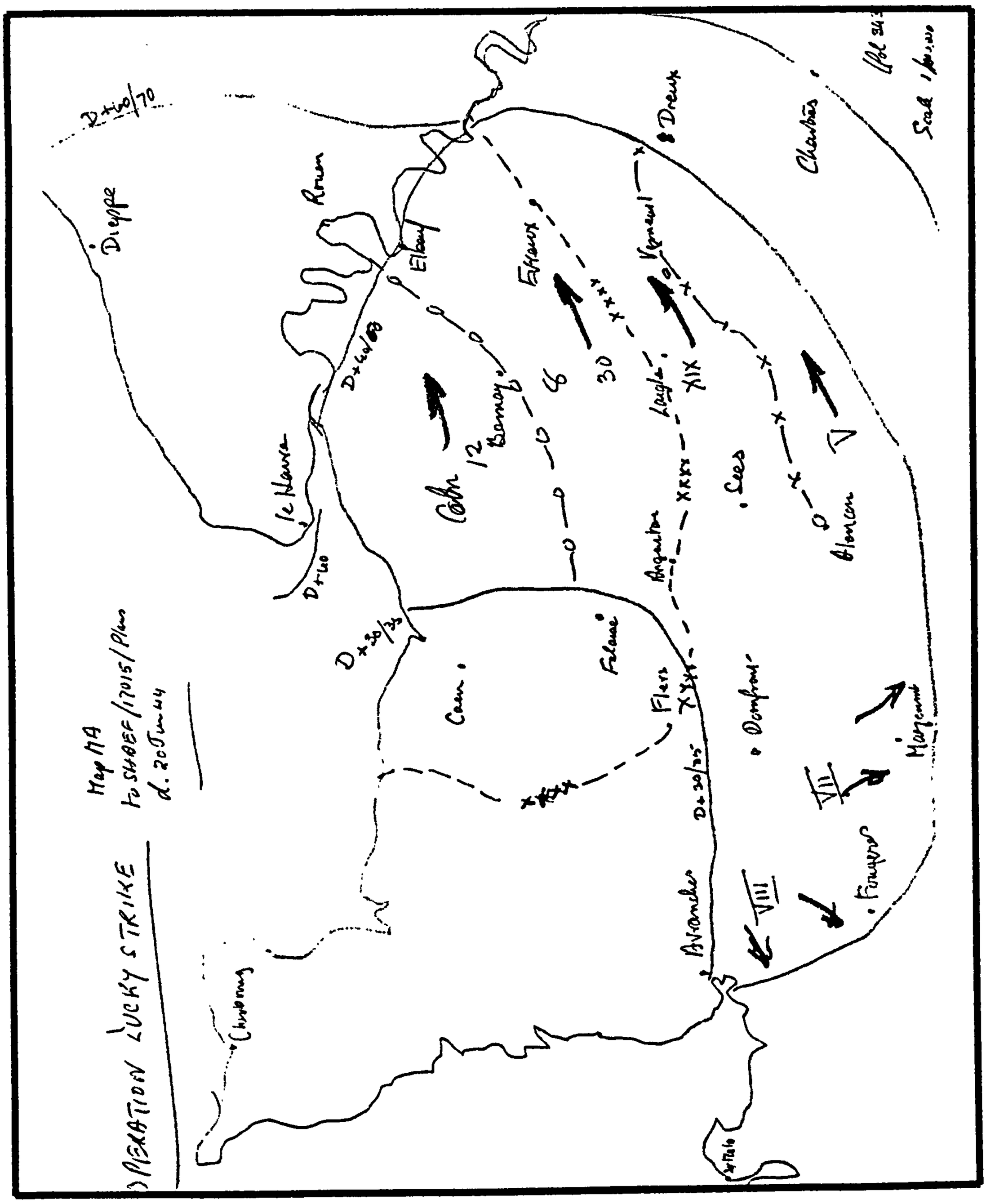

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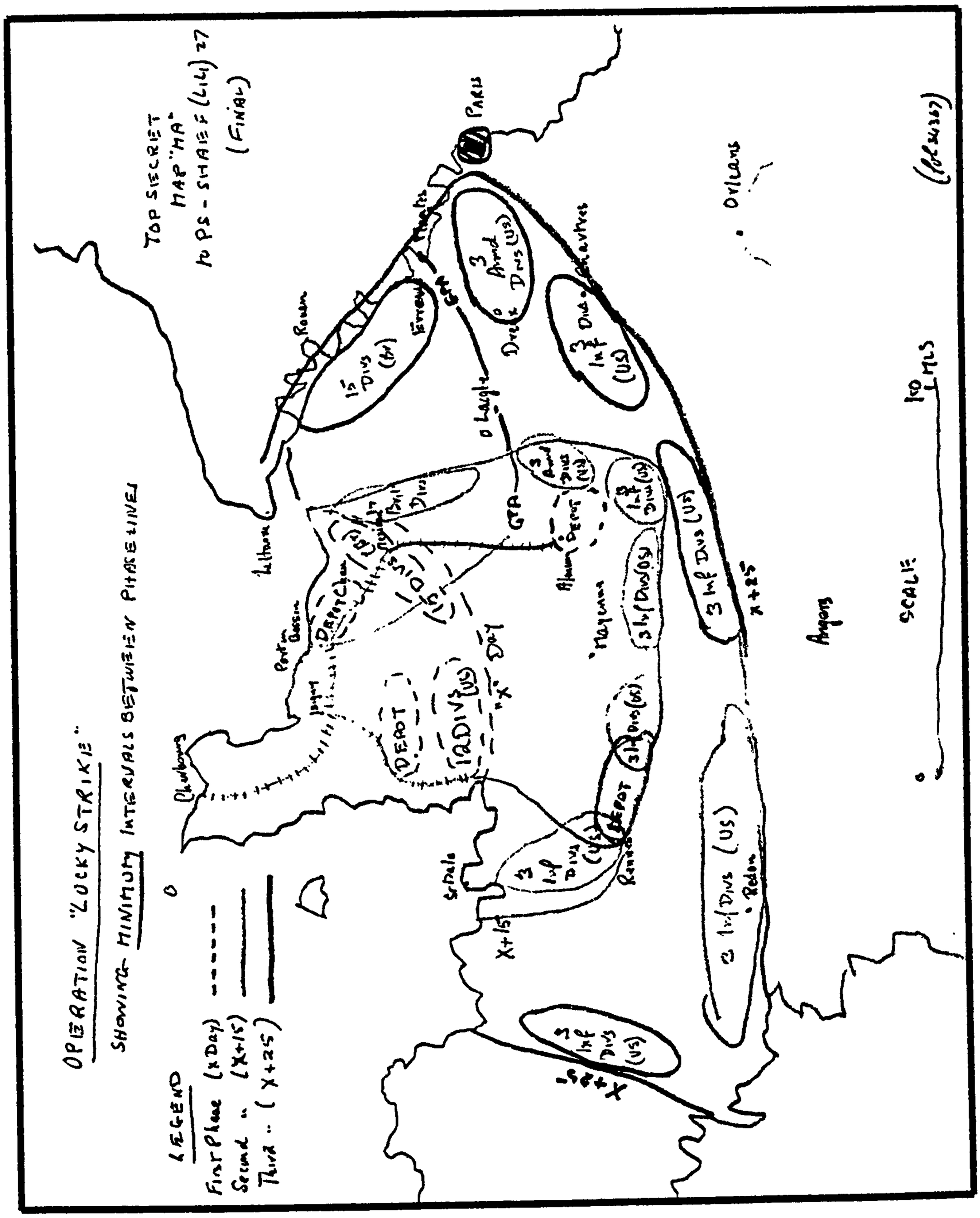

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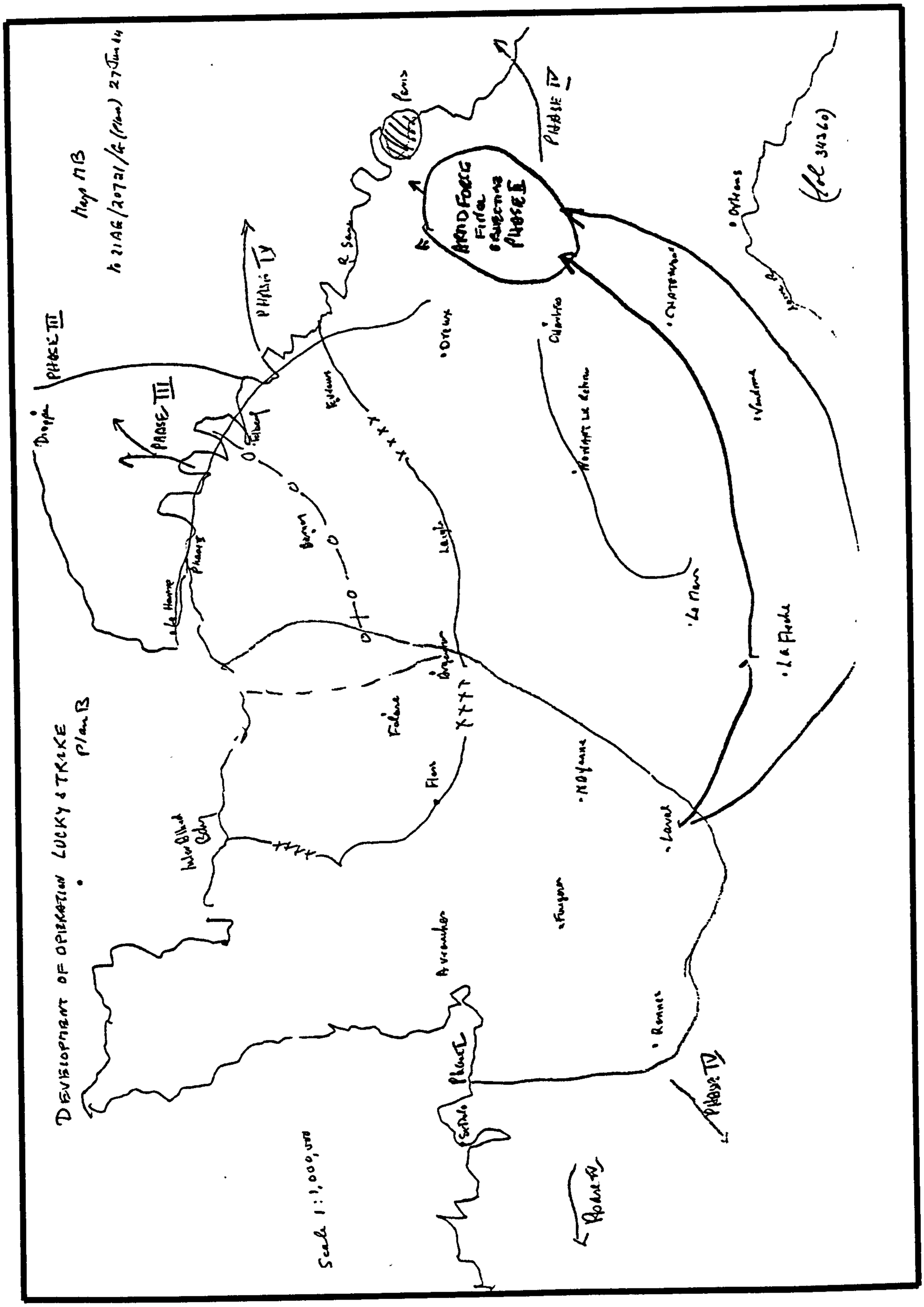
DEVELOPMENT OF OPERATION LUCKY STRIKE
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PHASE III
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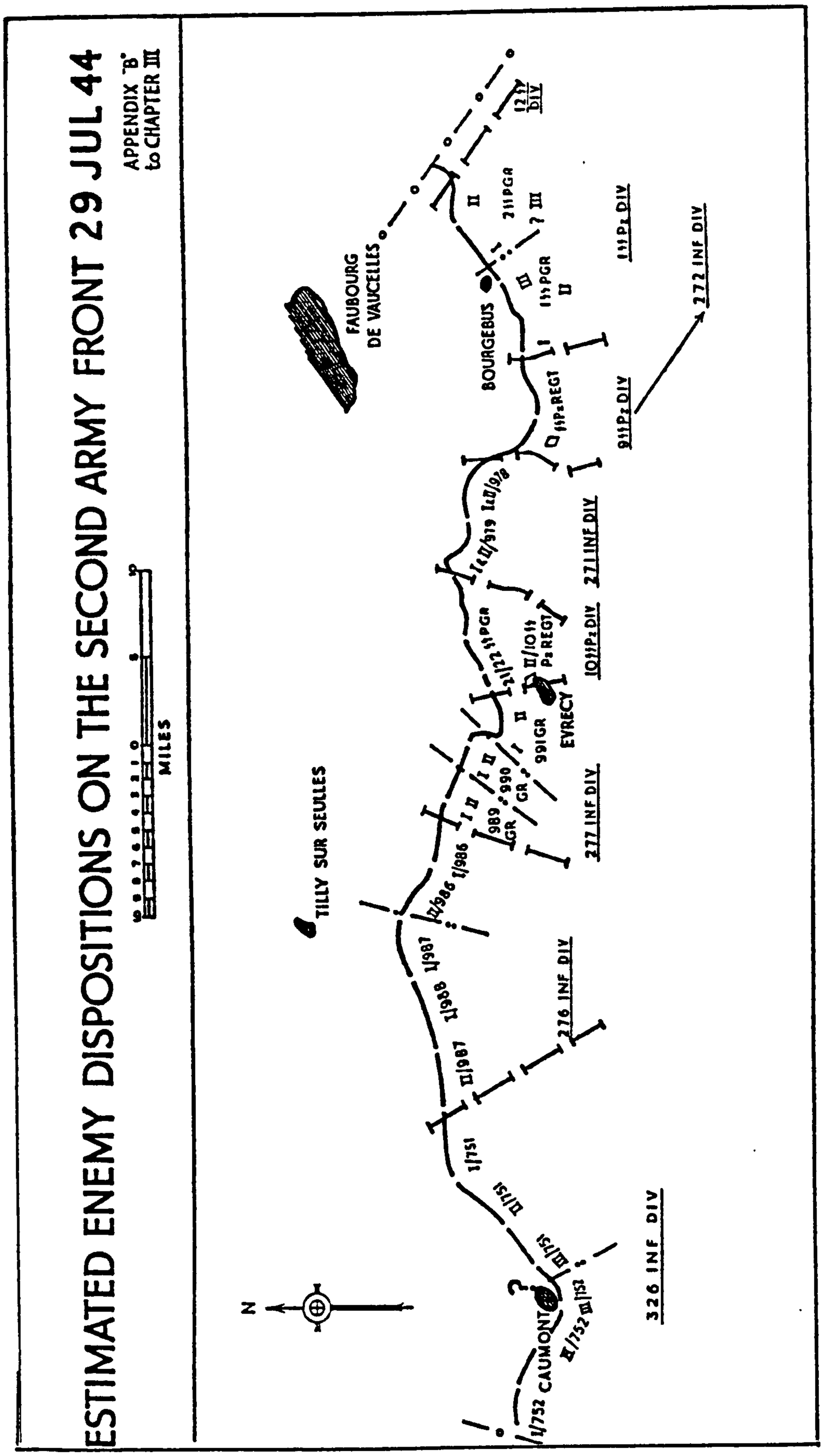
Figure 20 (referenced in Chapter 3)



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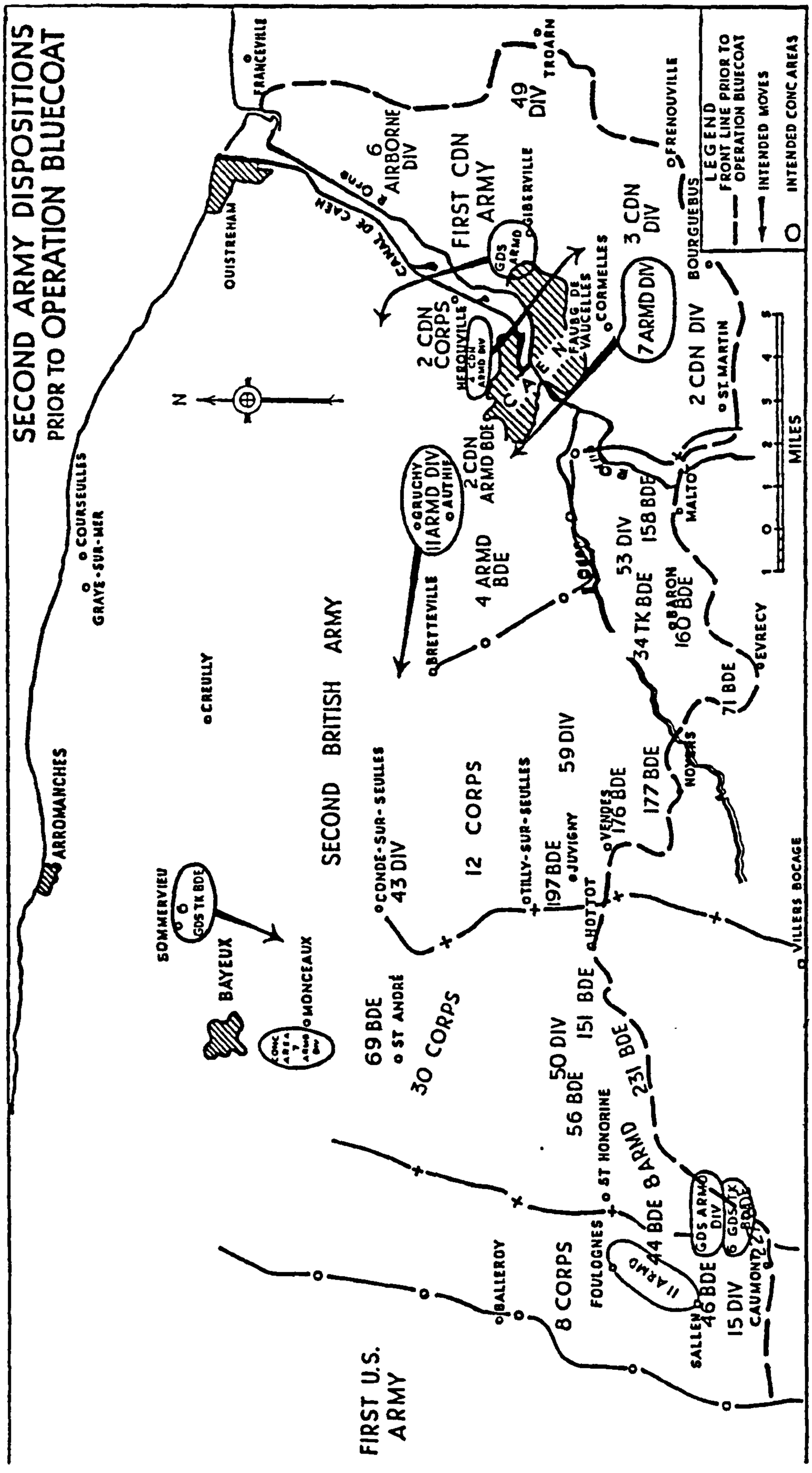

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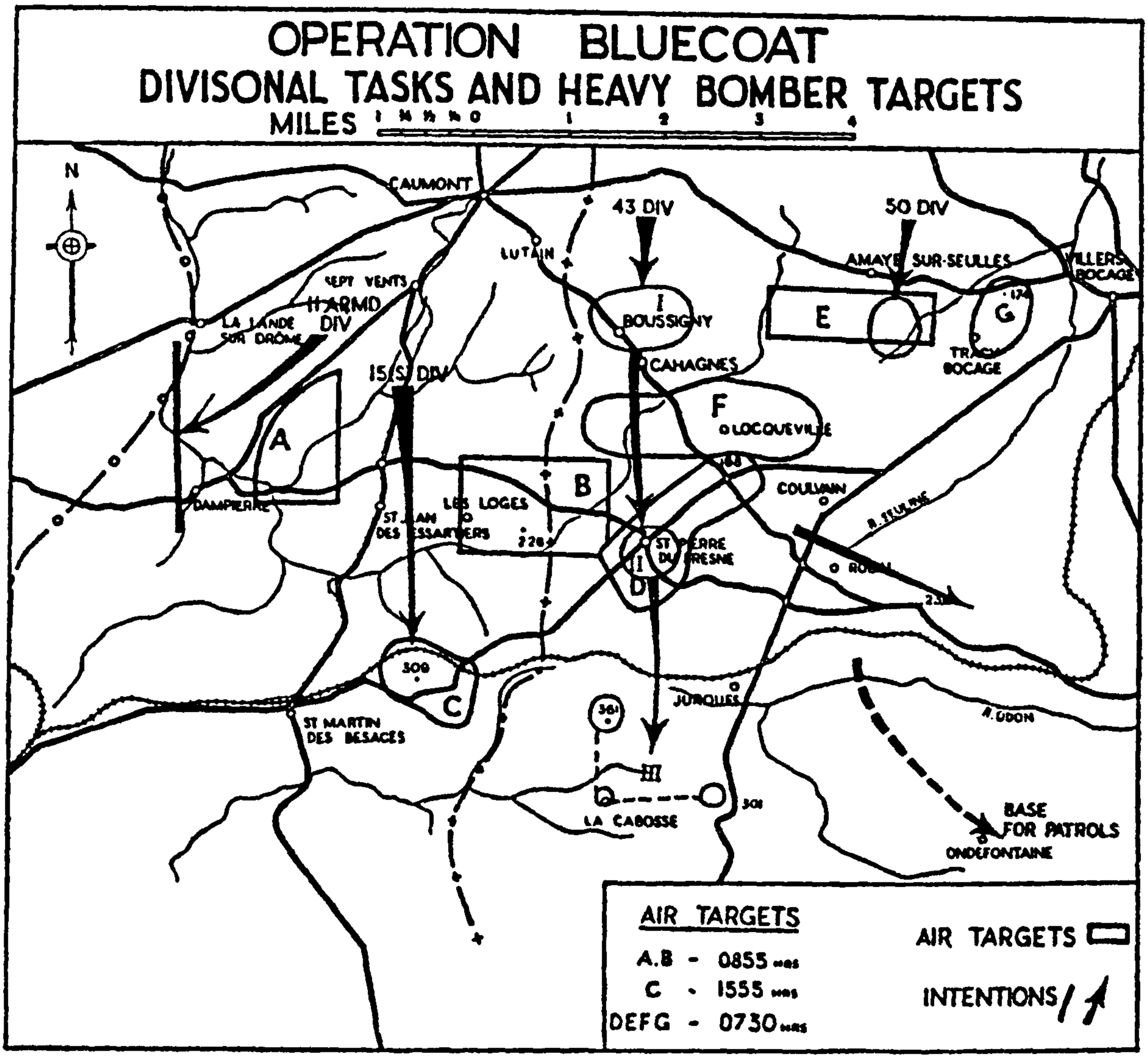

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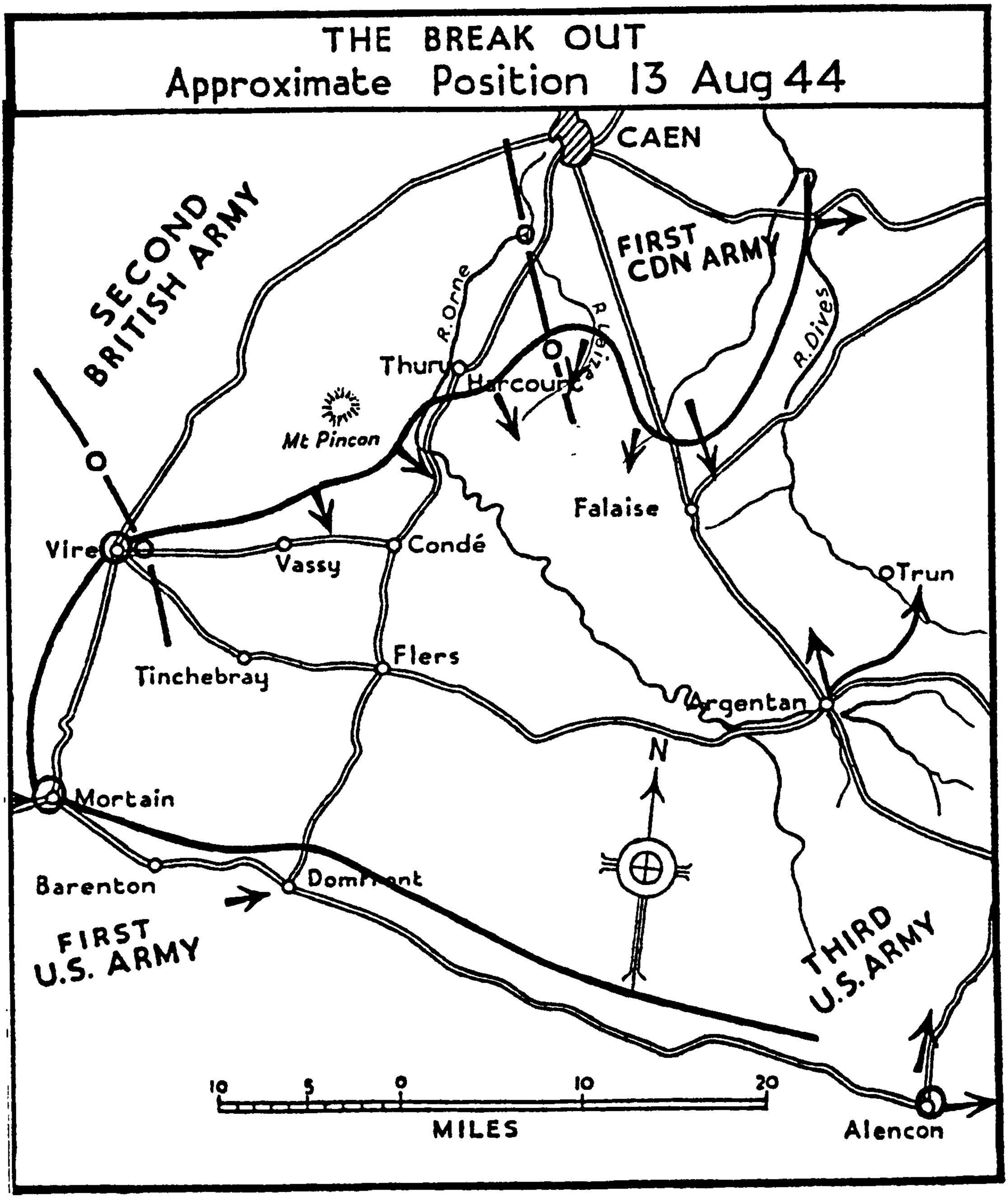

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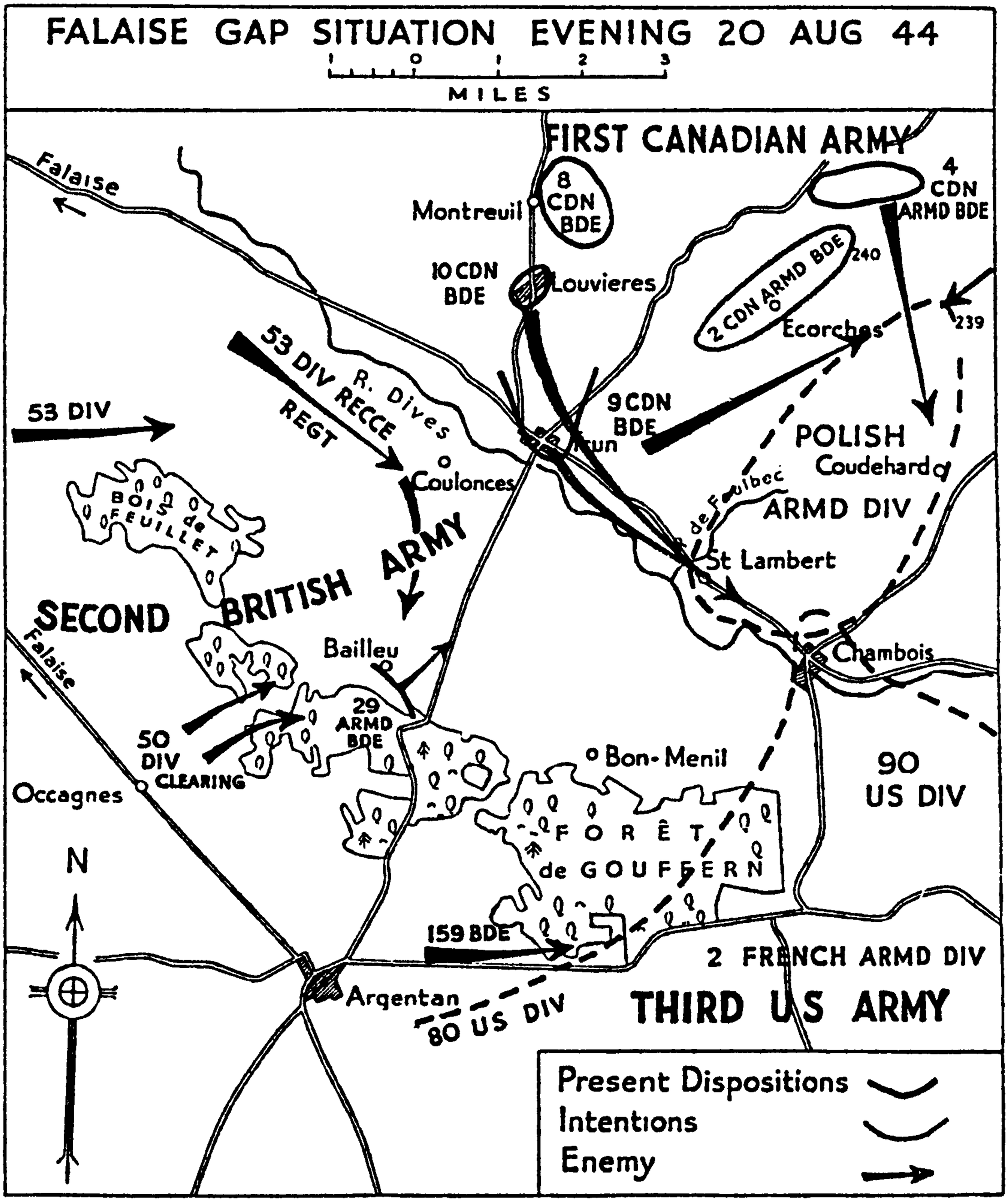

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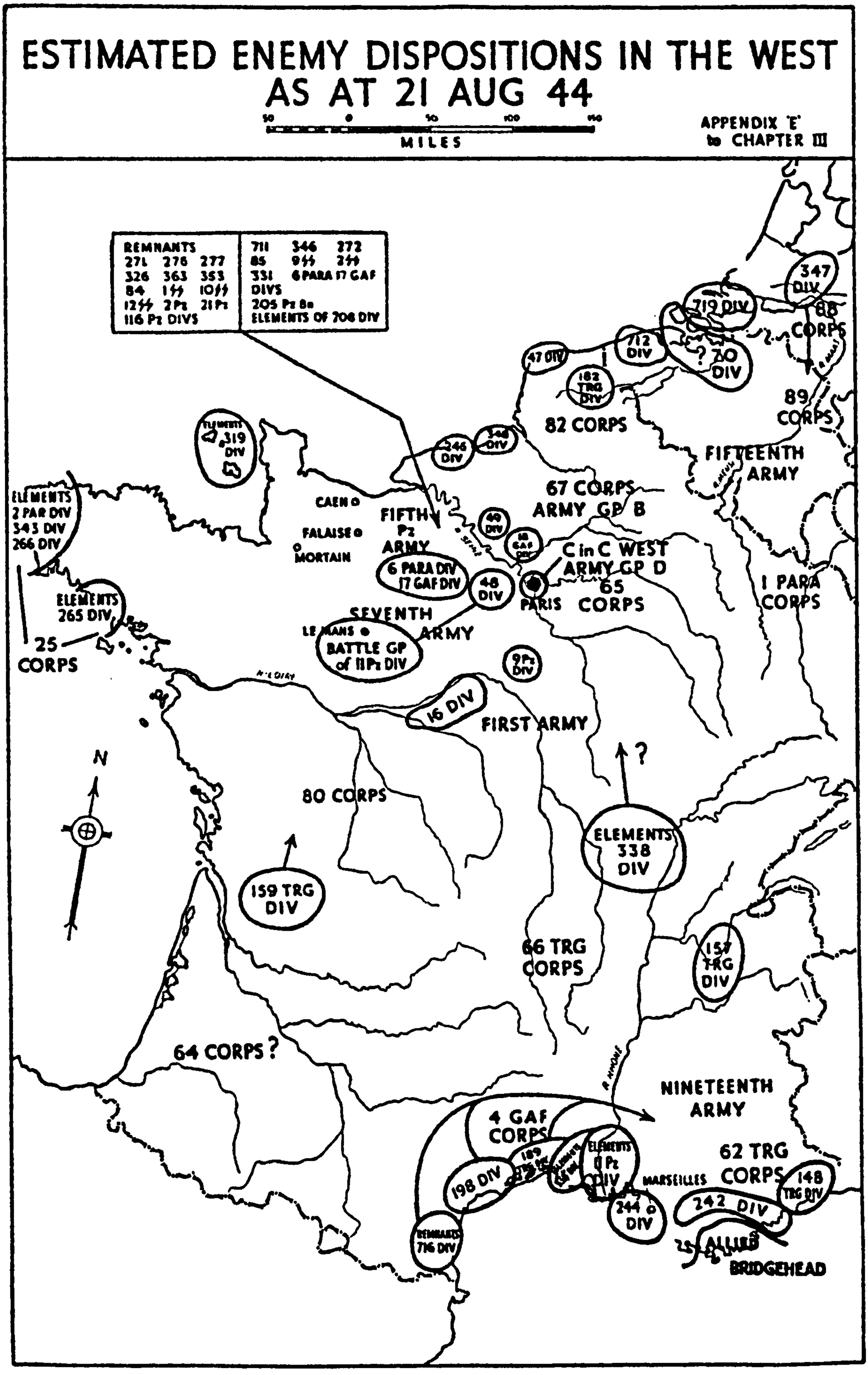
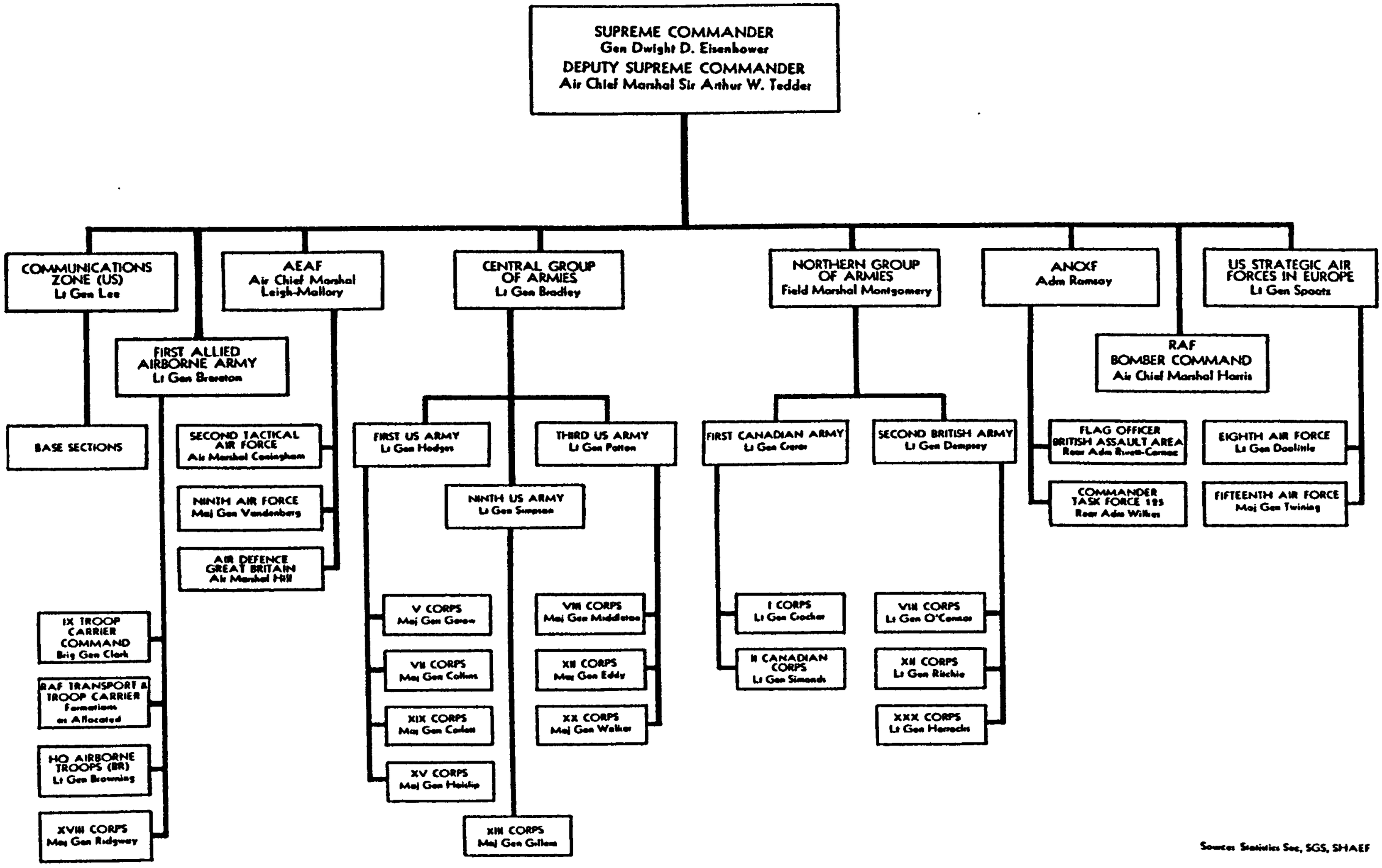


Figure 26 (referenced in Chapters 3 and 7)

Operational Chain of Command, AEF, 1 September 1944



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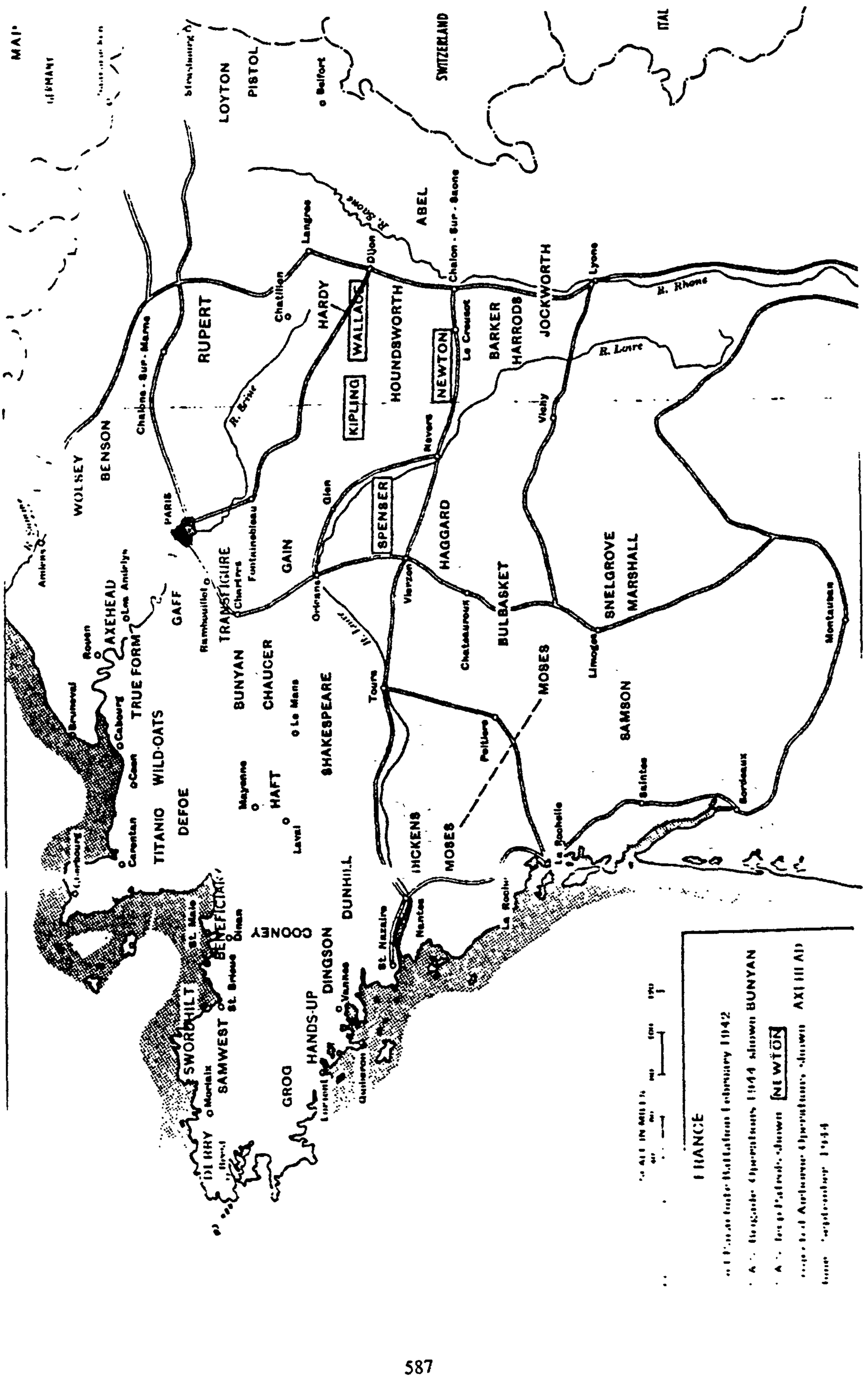


Figure 28 (referenced in Chapters 5 and 6)

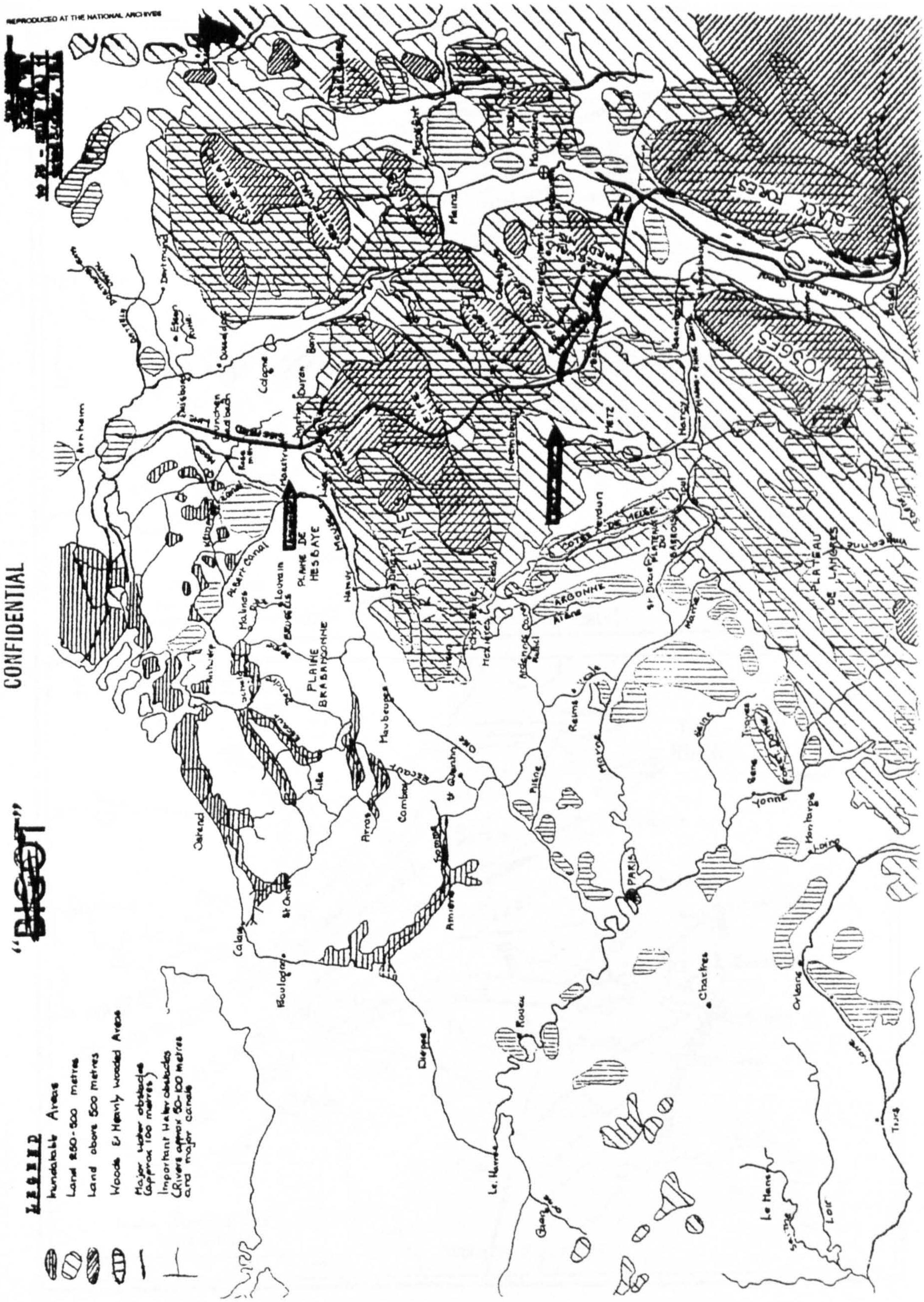
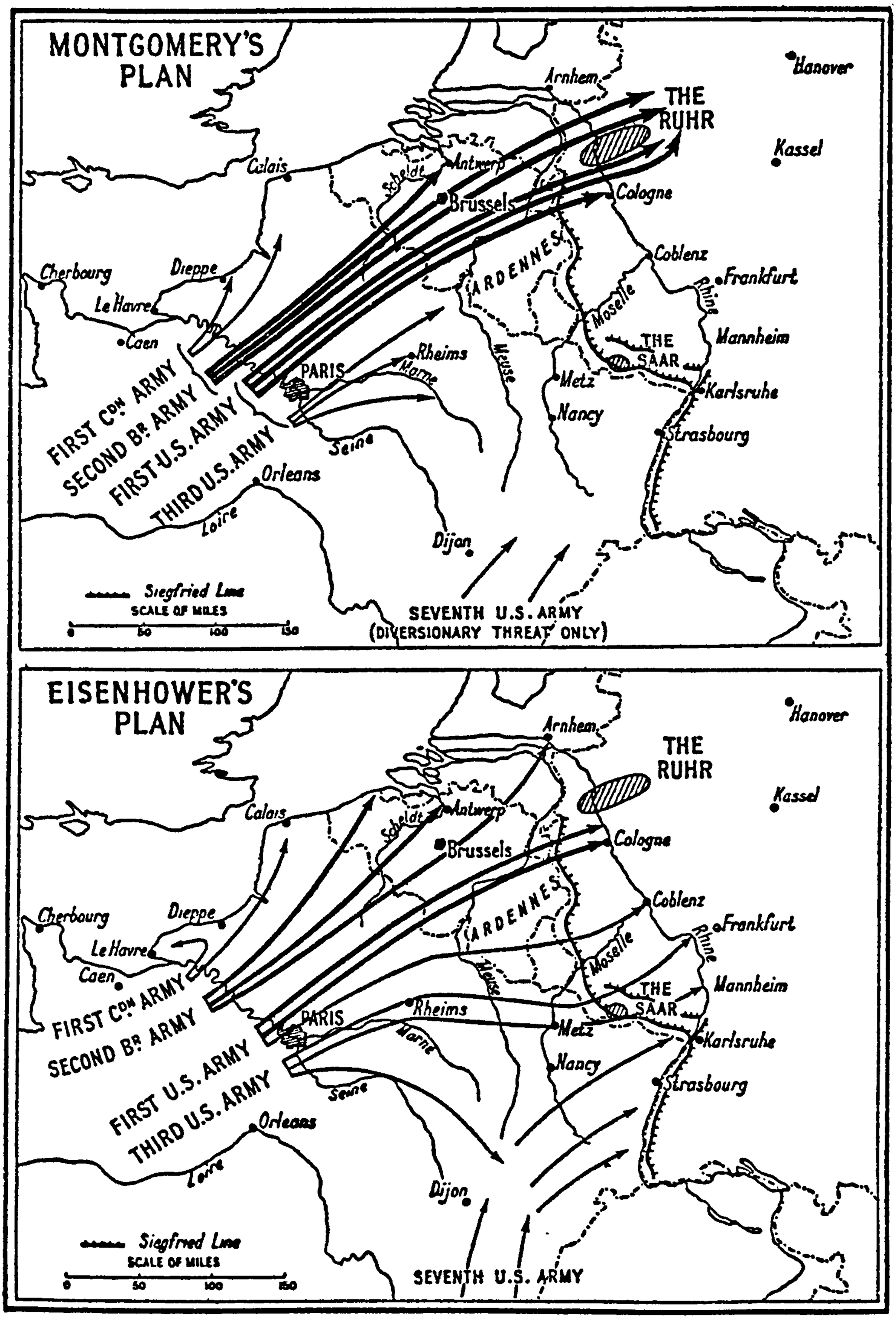


Figure 29 (referenced in Chapters 5, 6 and 7)



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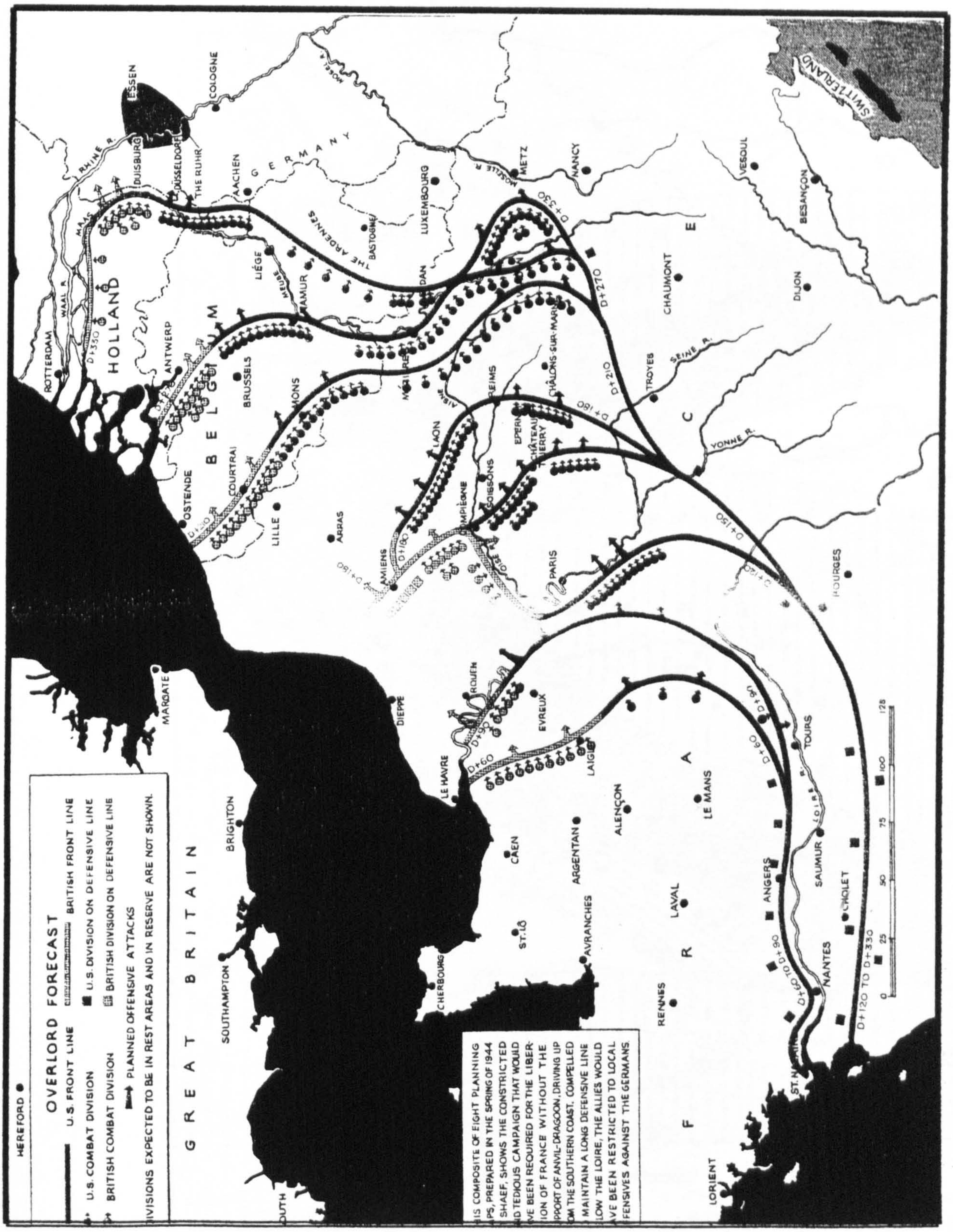
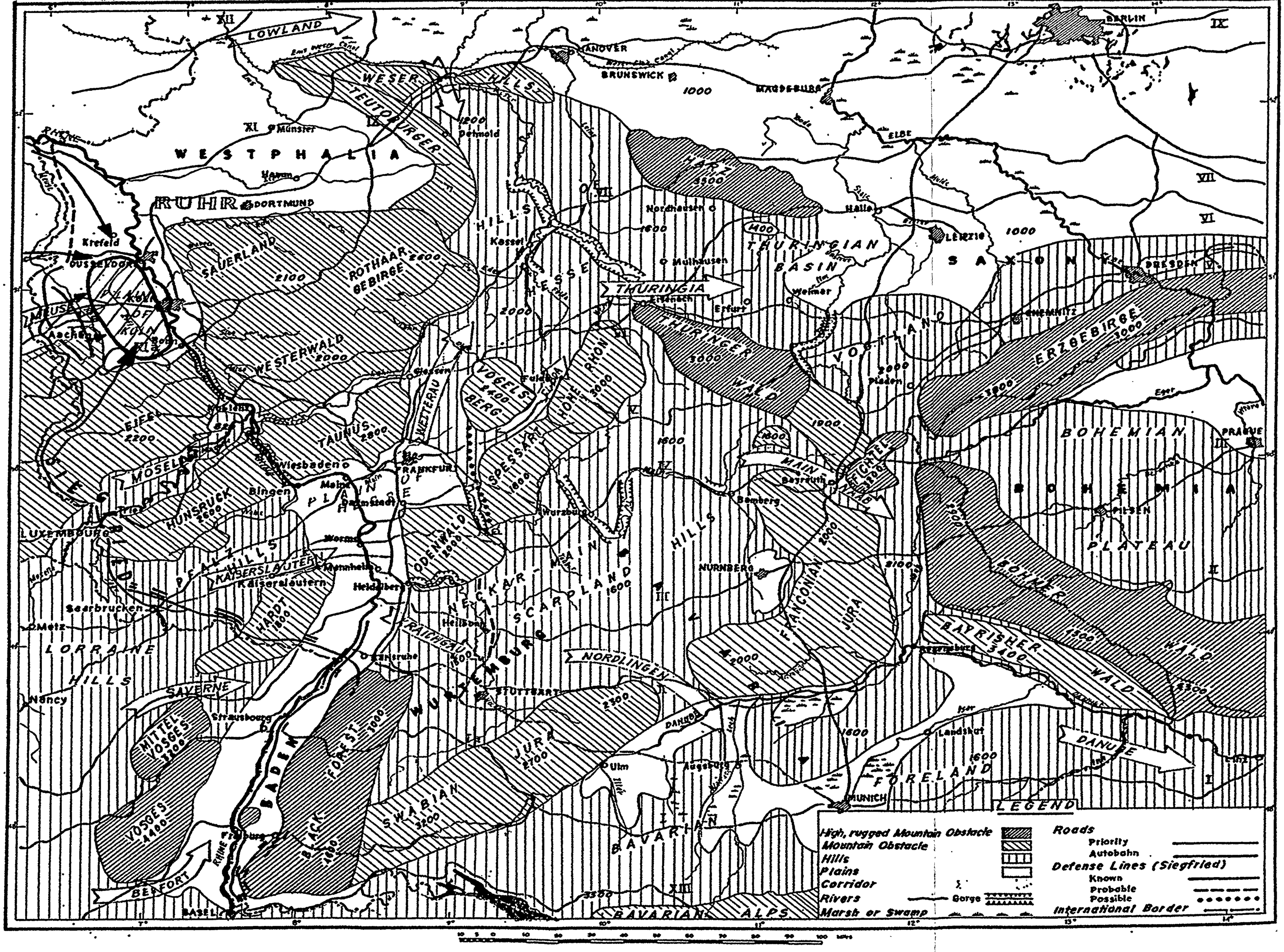


SCALE 1:1,250,000

GENERALIZED ENEMY TERRAIN

Central and Southwestern Germany



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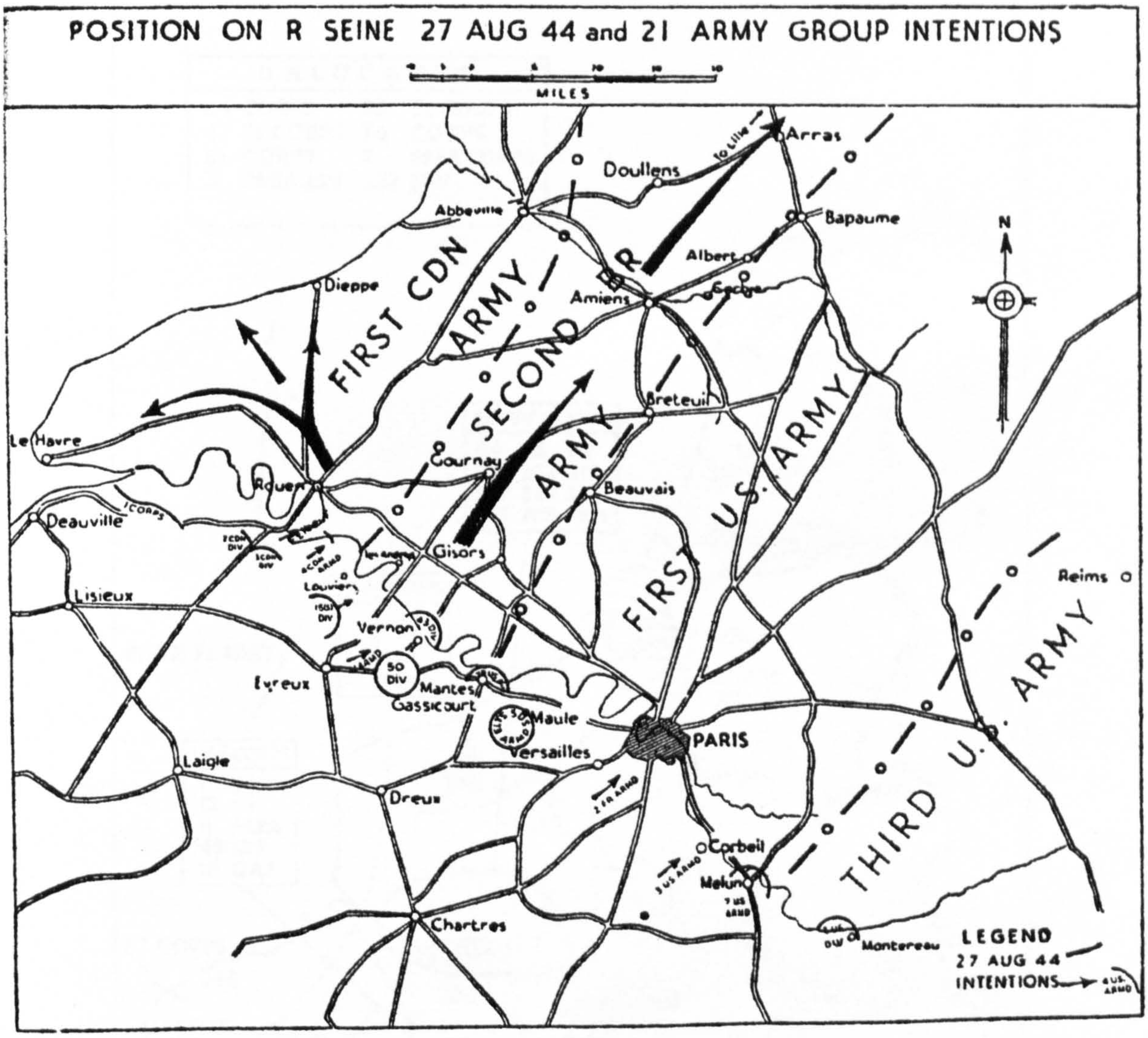

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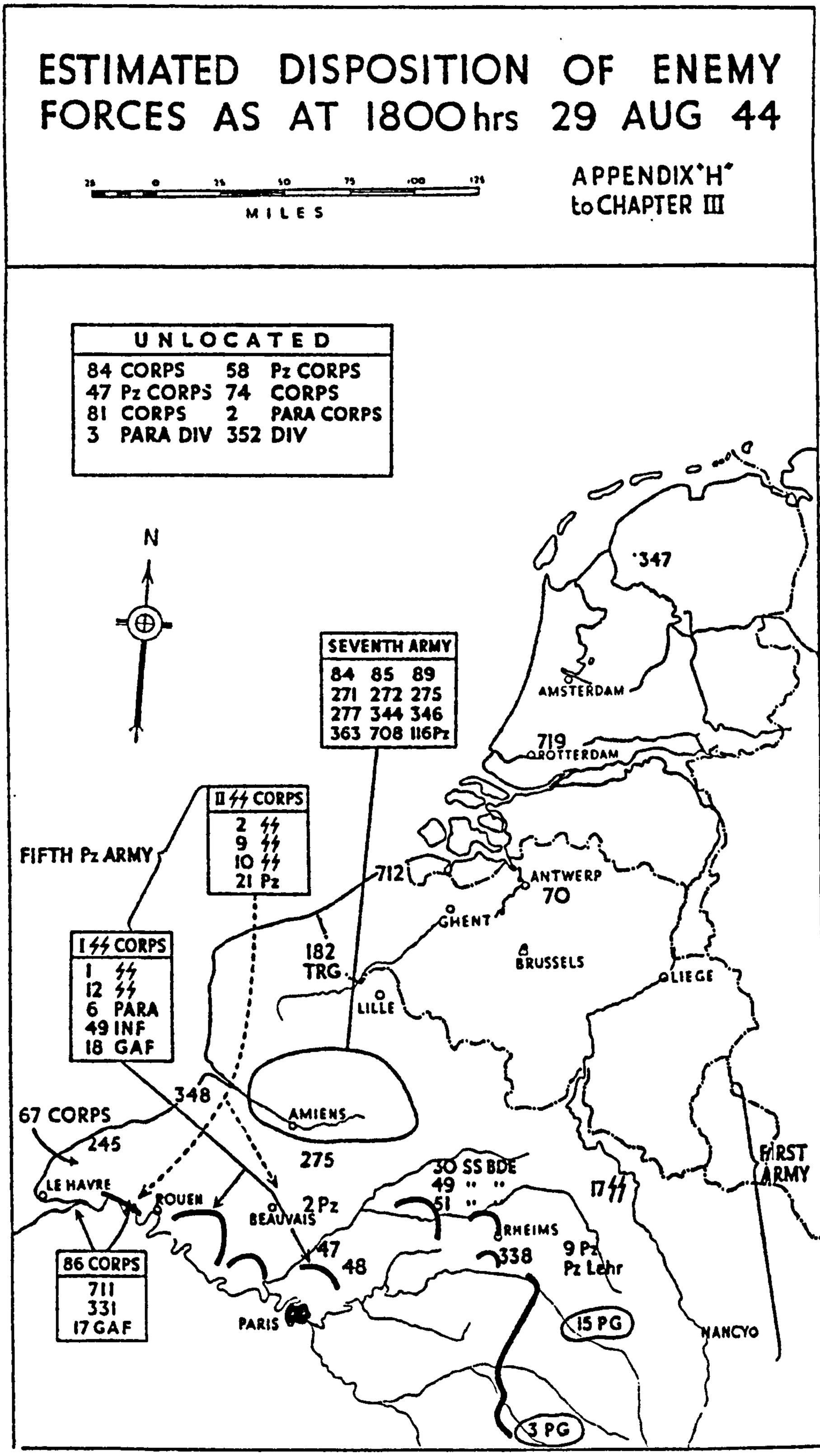

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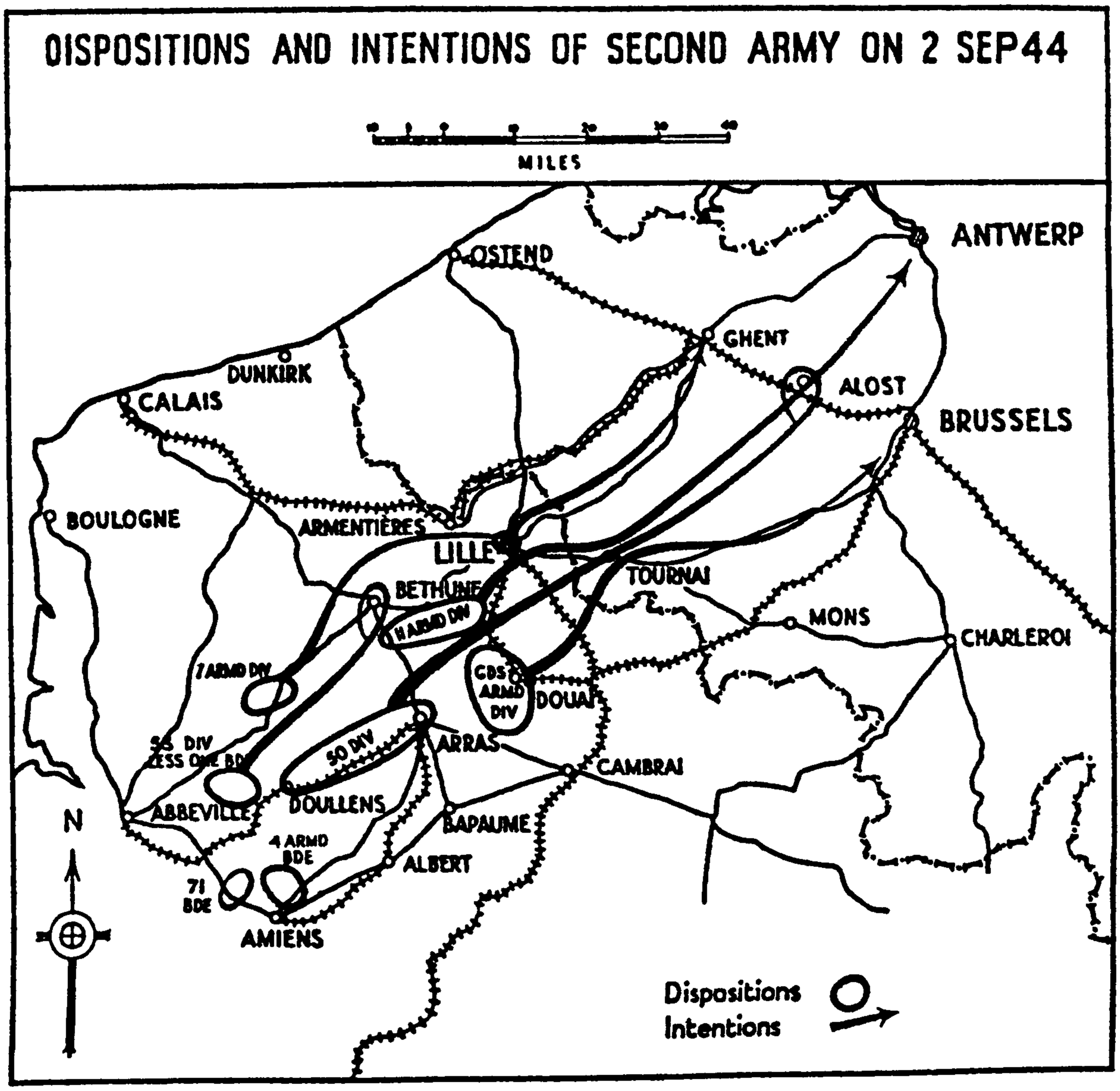

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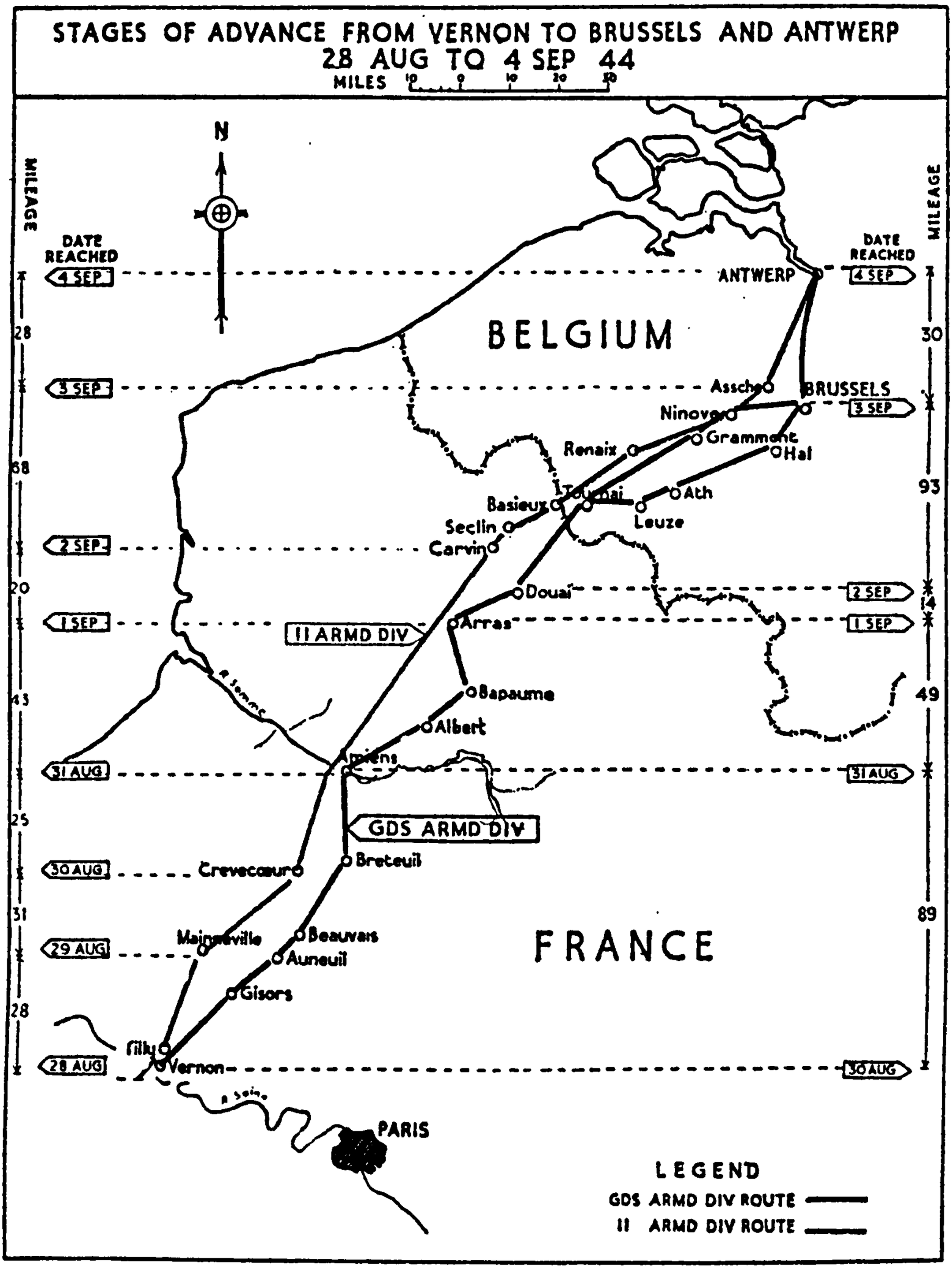

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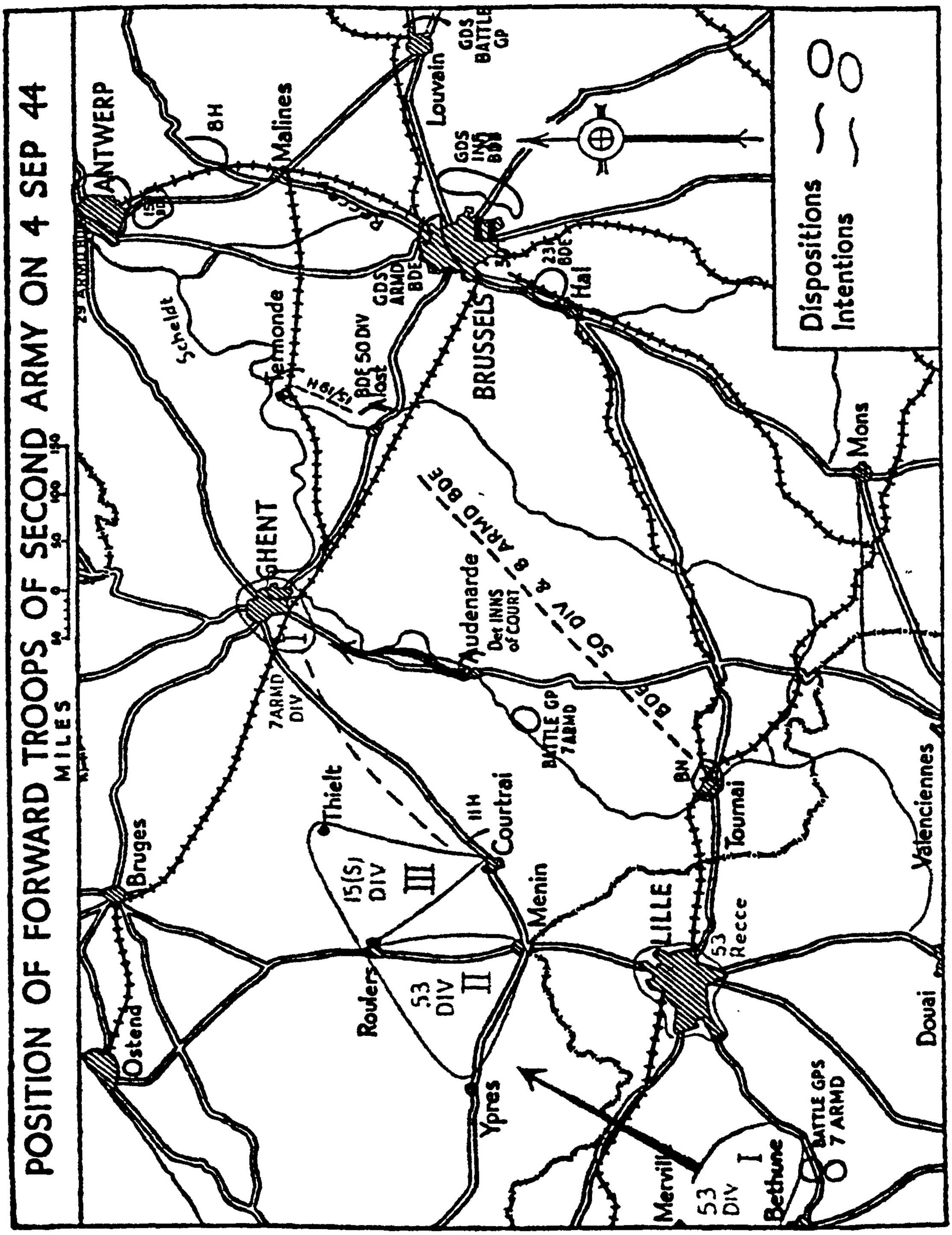
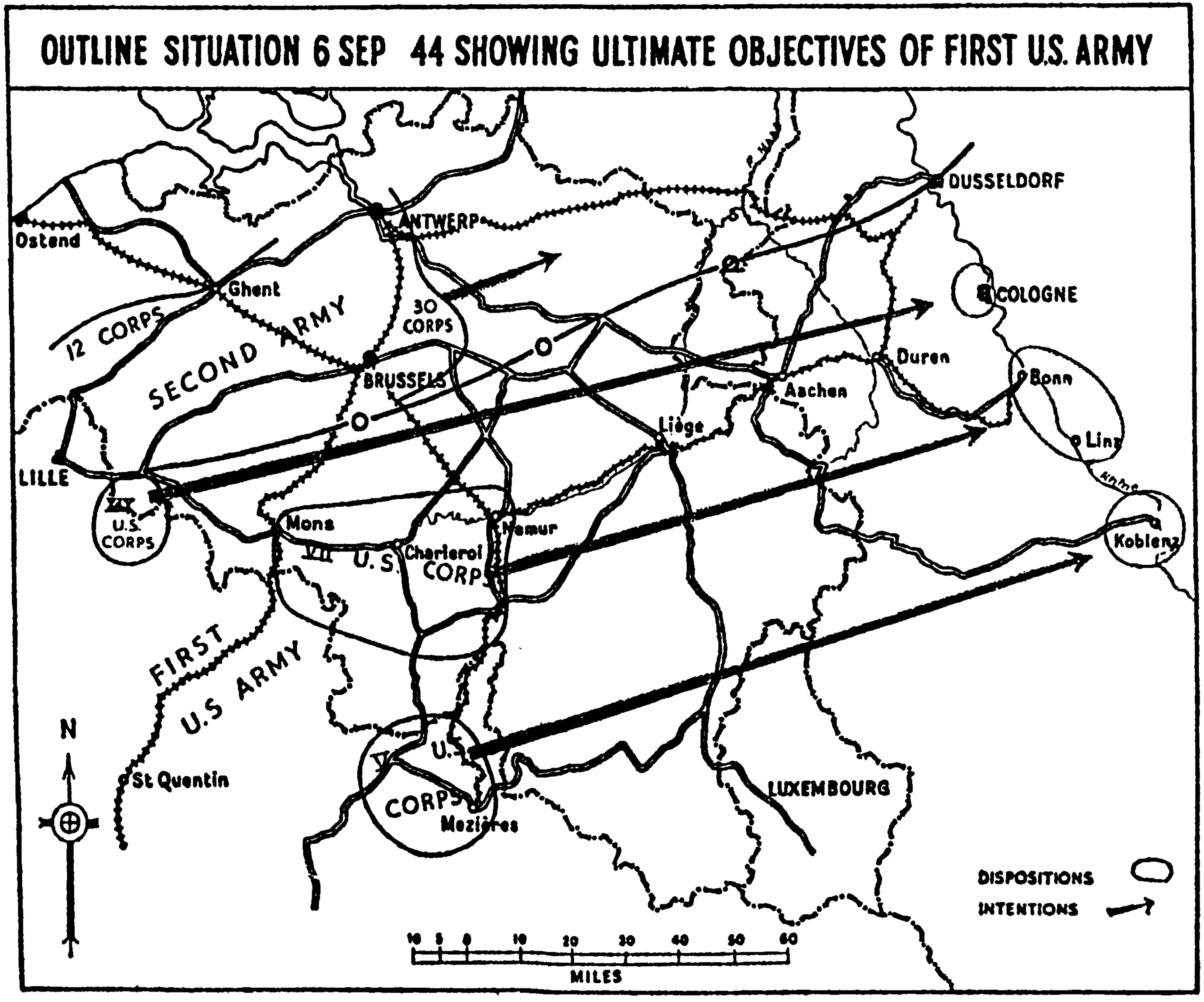


OUTLINE SITUATION 6 SEP 44 SHOWING ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES OF FIRST U.S. ARMY



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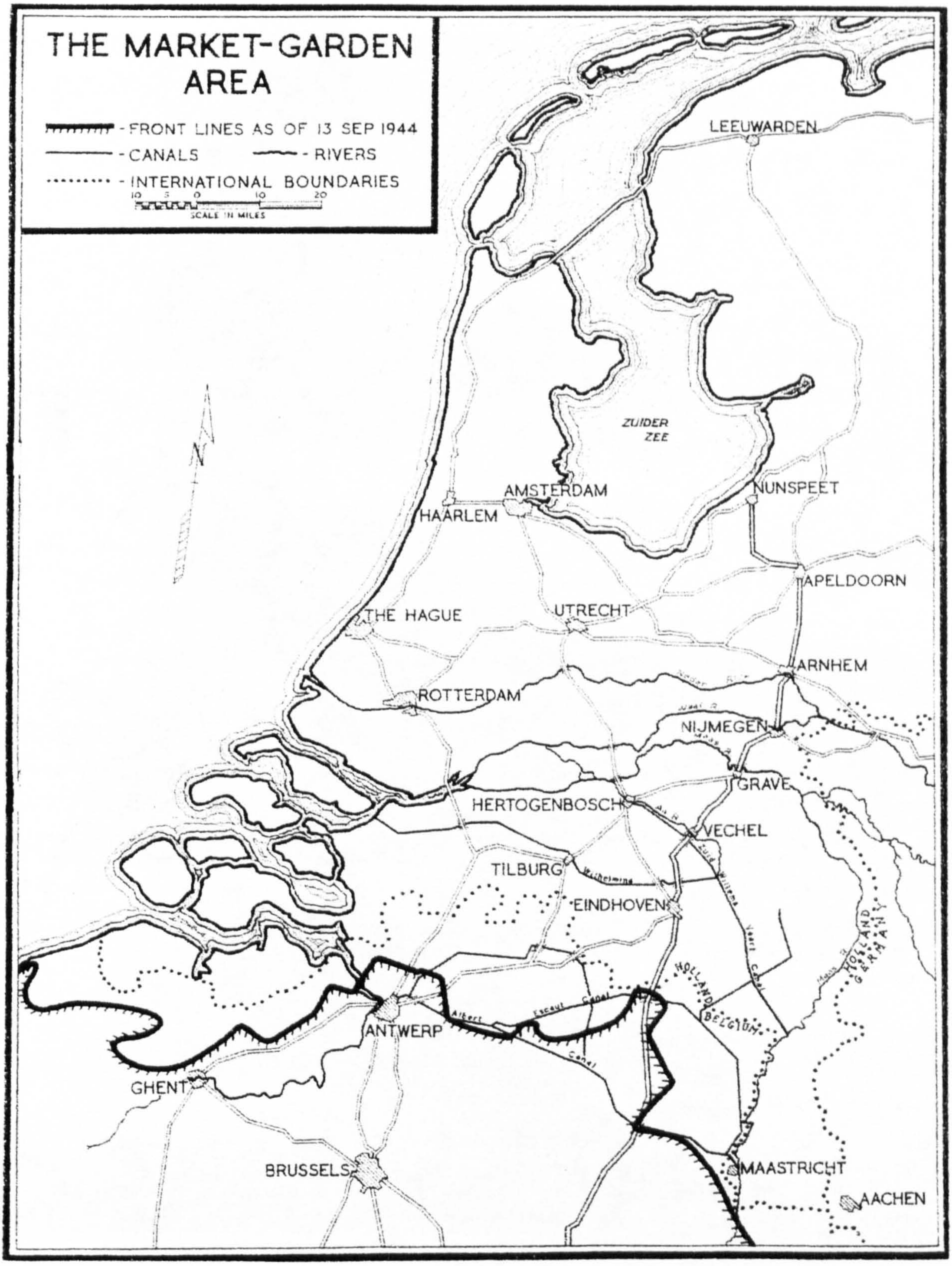

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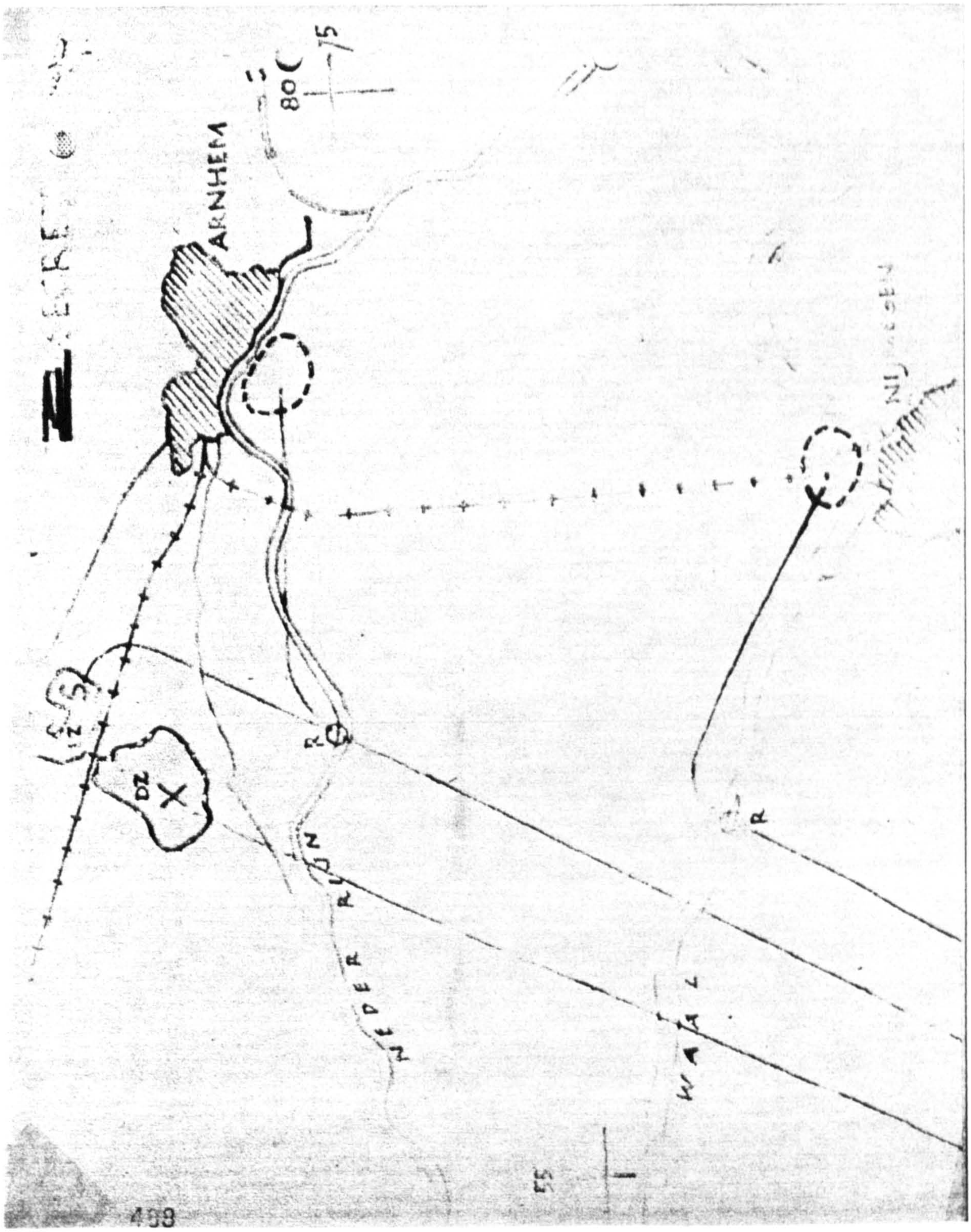
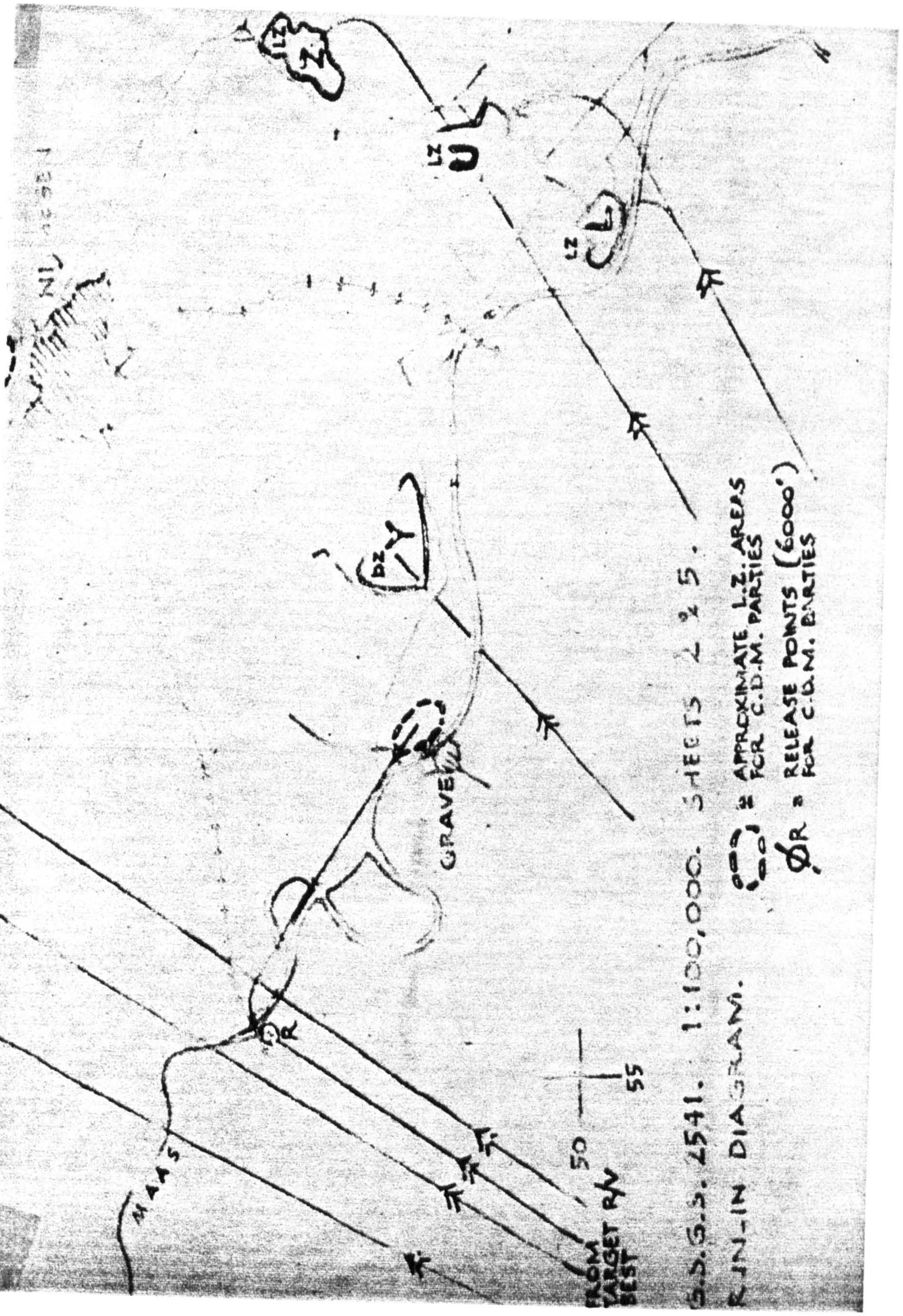


Operation COMET, Landings Near Arnhem and South

Figure 40 (referenced in Chapter 8)



Operation COMET: Landings South of Nijmegen

Figure 41 (referenced in Chapter 8)

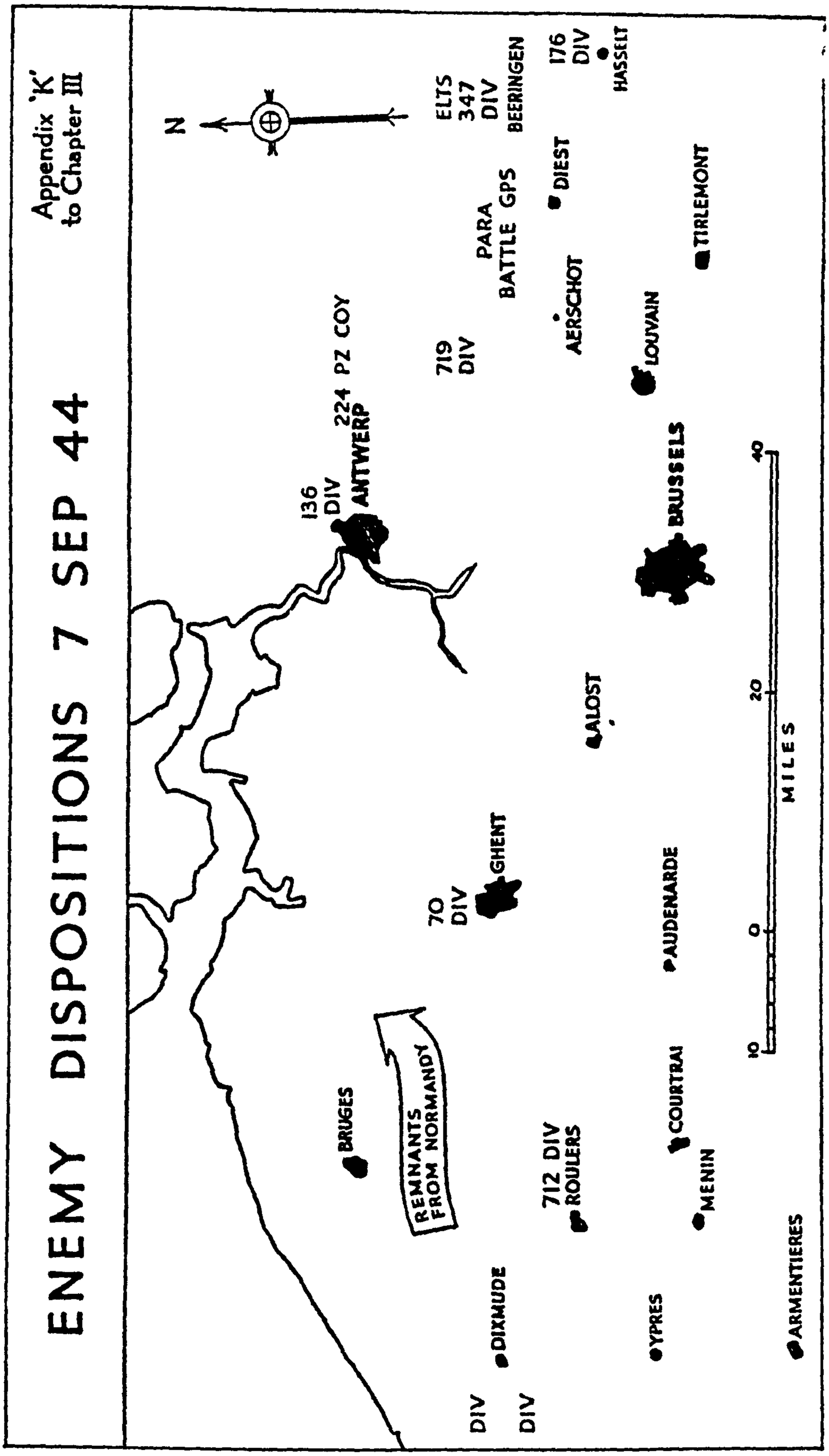


Figure 42 (referenced in Chapter 8)

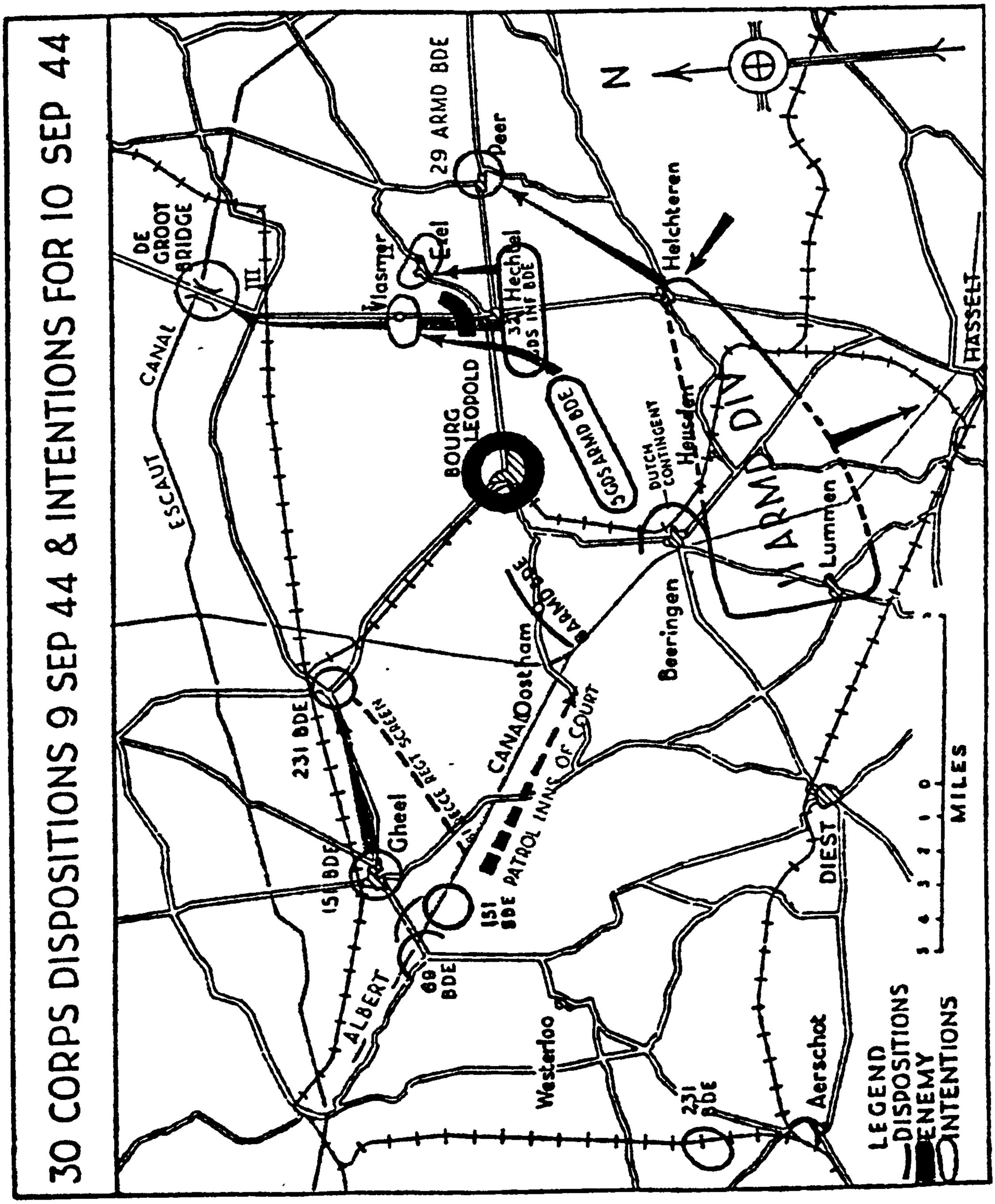


Figure 43 (referenced in Chapter 9)

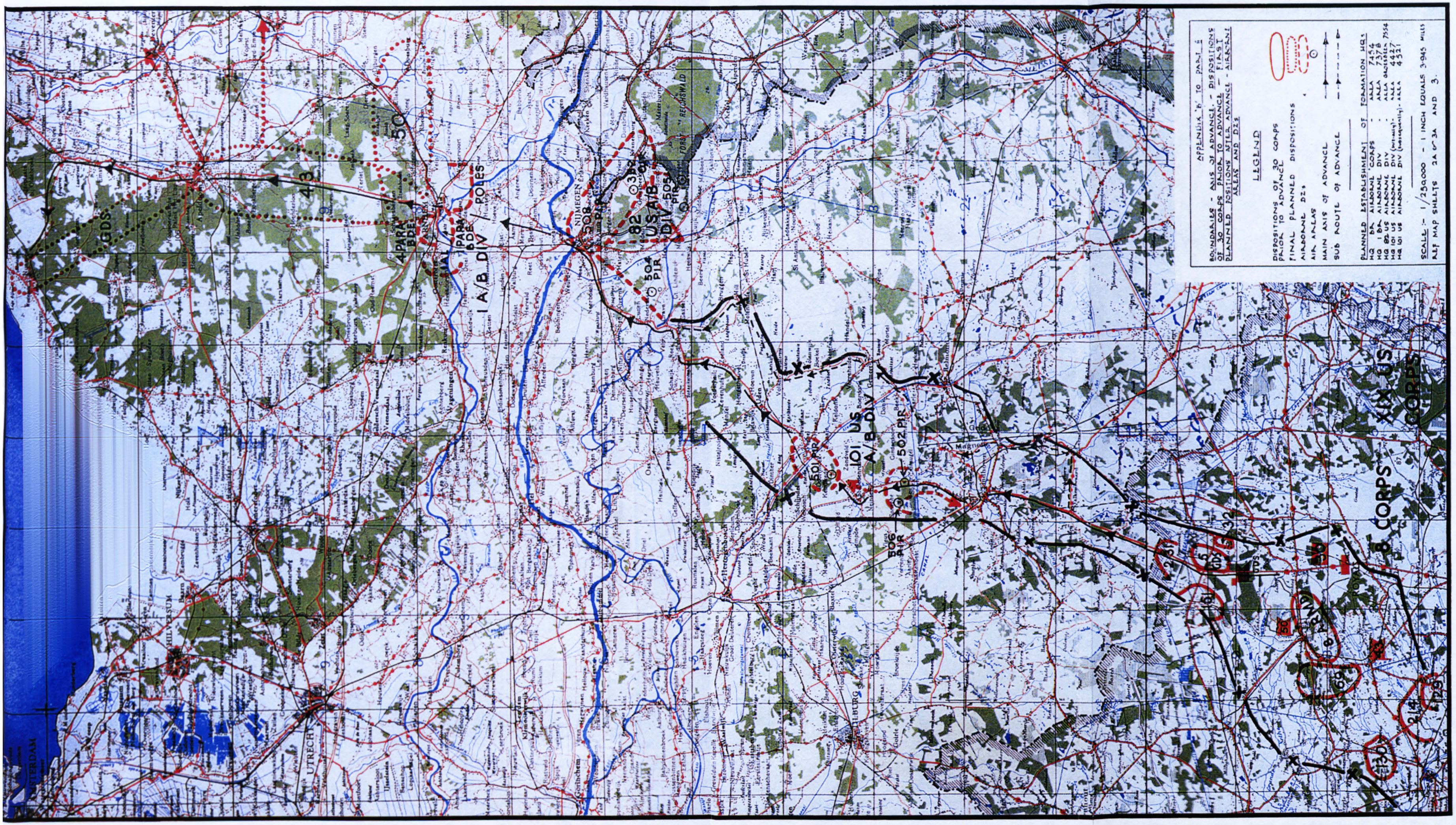


Figure 44 (referenced in Chapter 9)

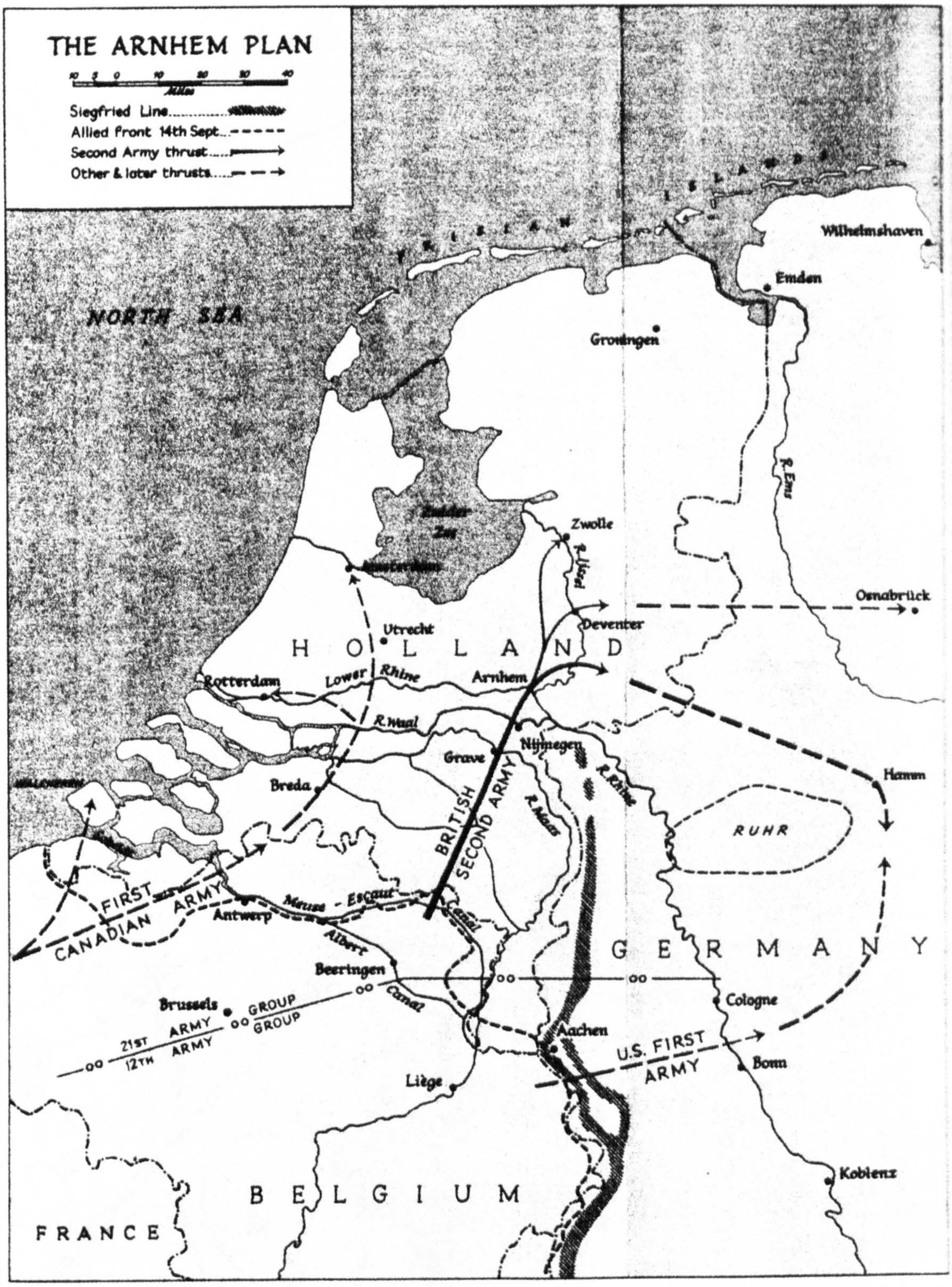


Figure 45 (referenced in Chapter 9)

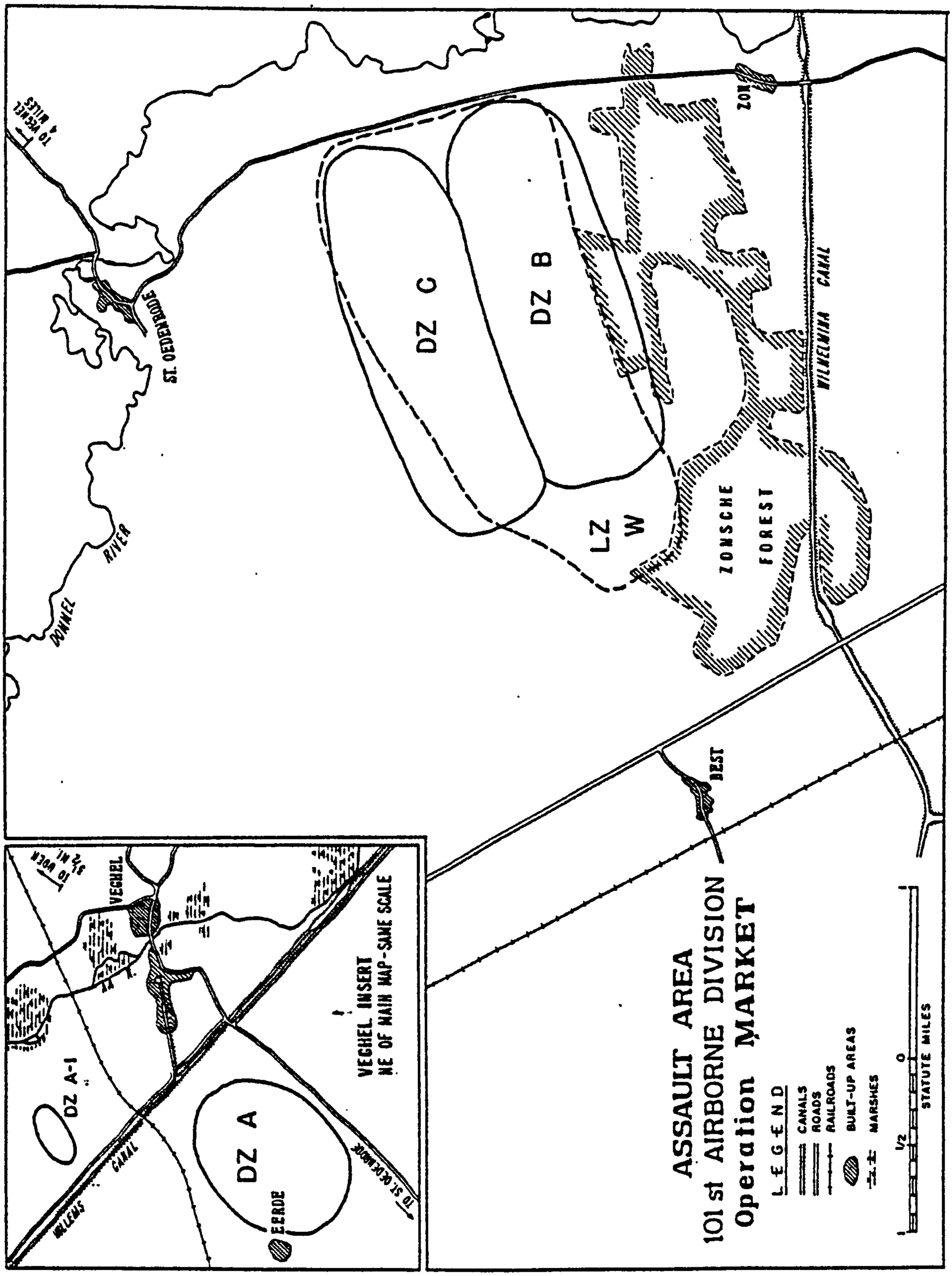
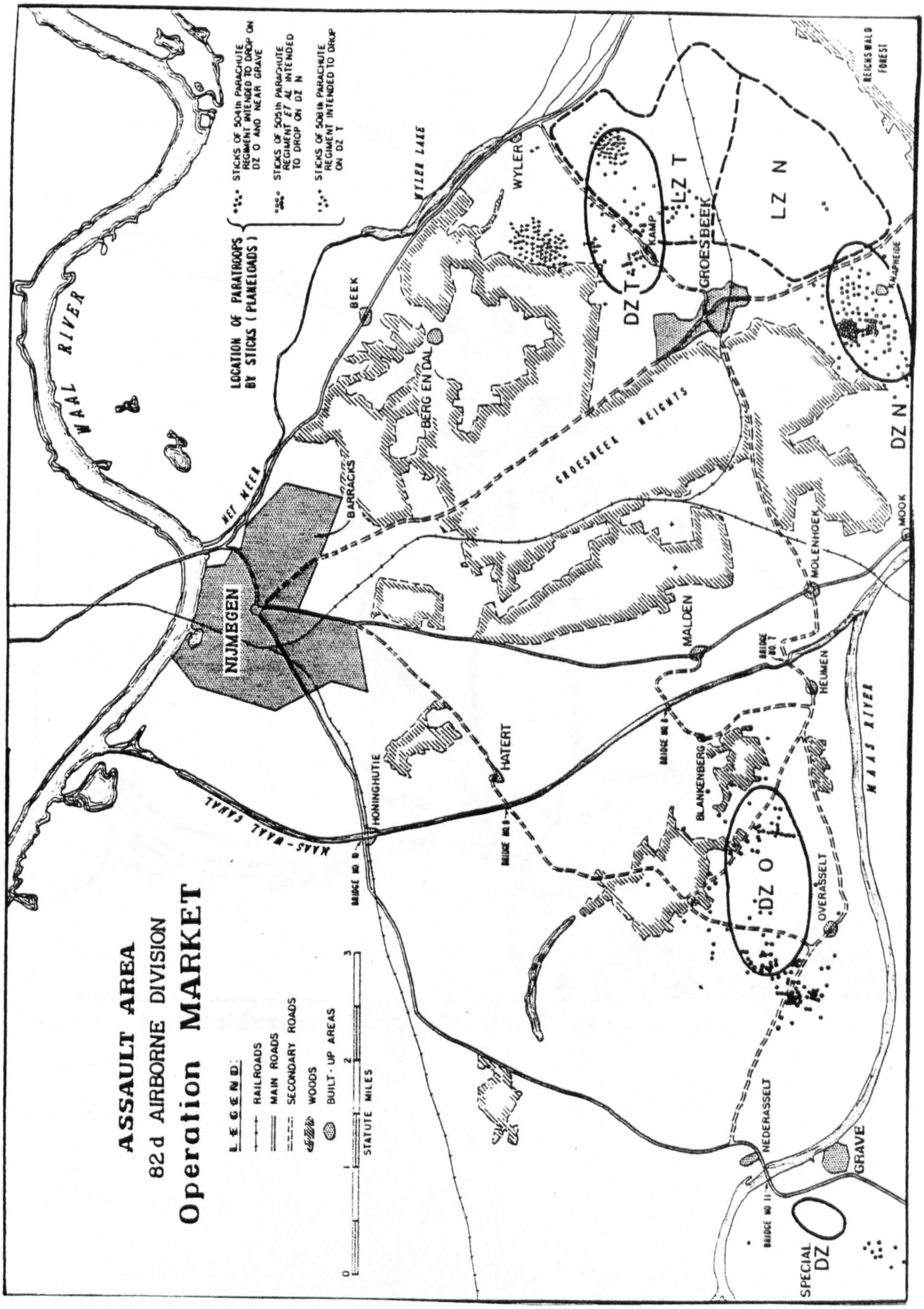
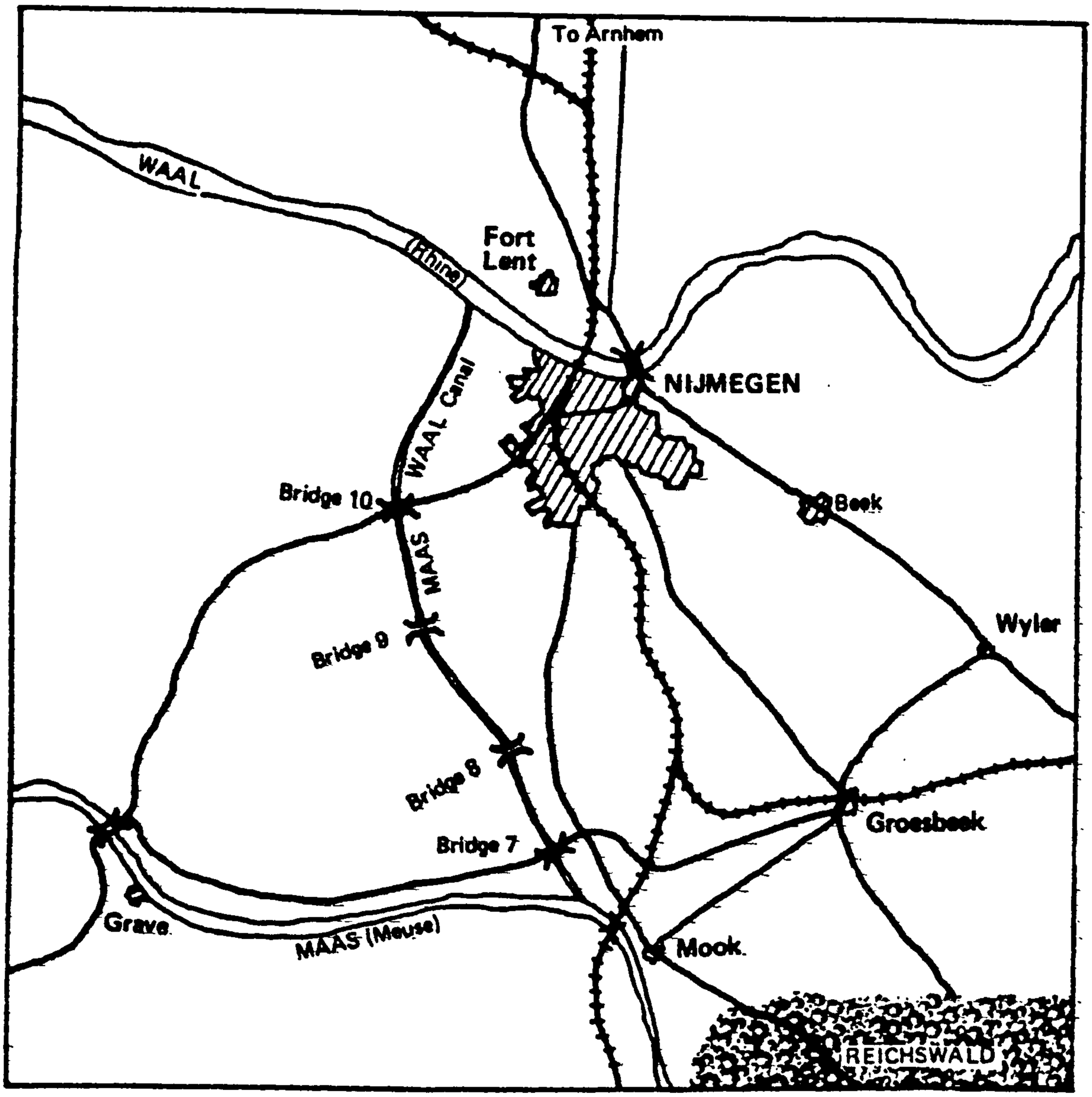


Figure 46 (referenced in Chapter 9)





Principal Features Around Nijmegen, Groesbeek, and Grave

Figure 48 (referenced in Chapter 9)

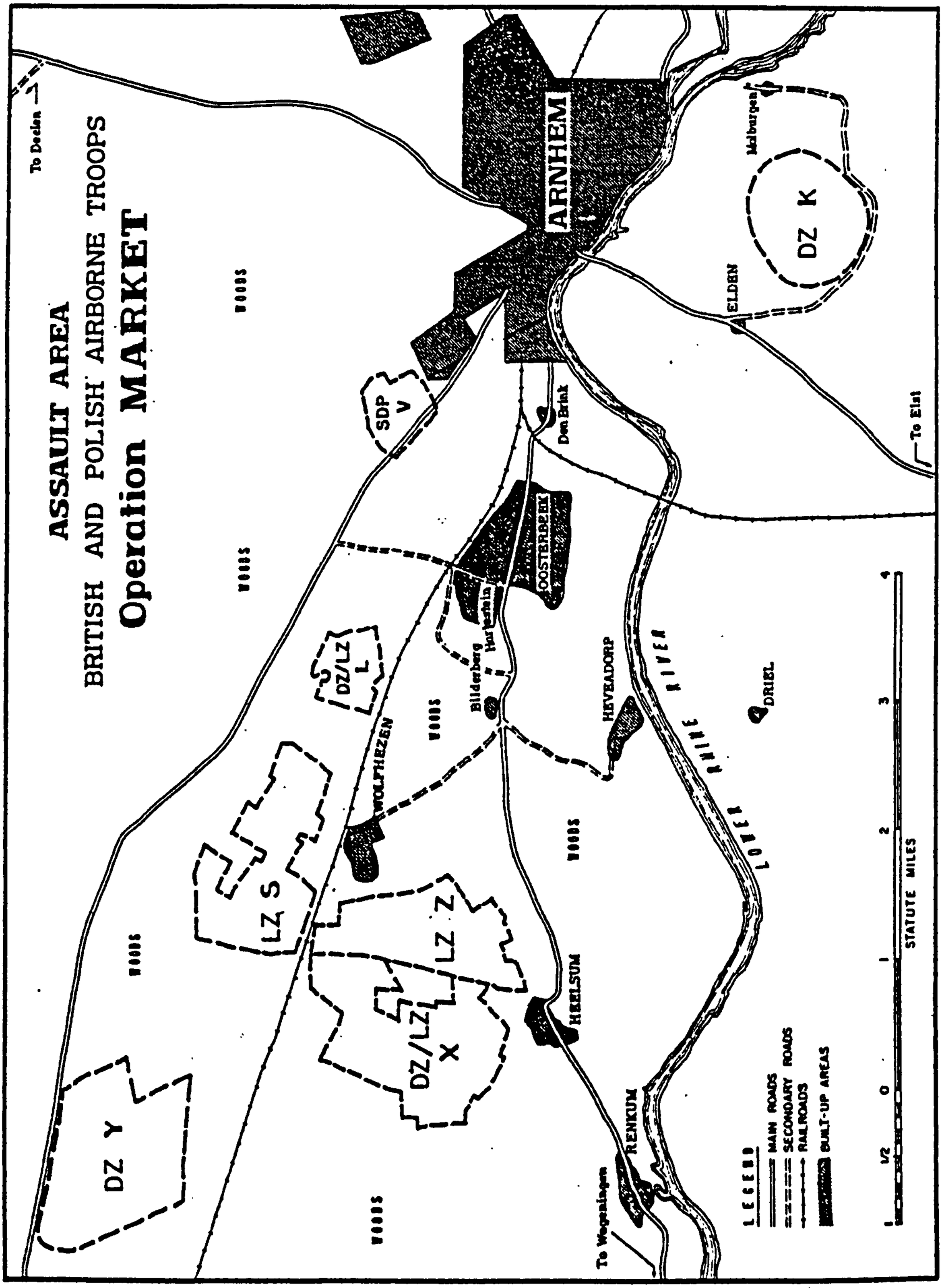


Figure 49 (referenced in Chapter 9)

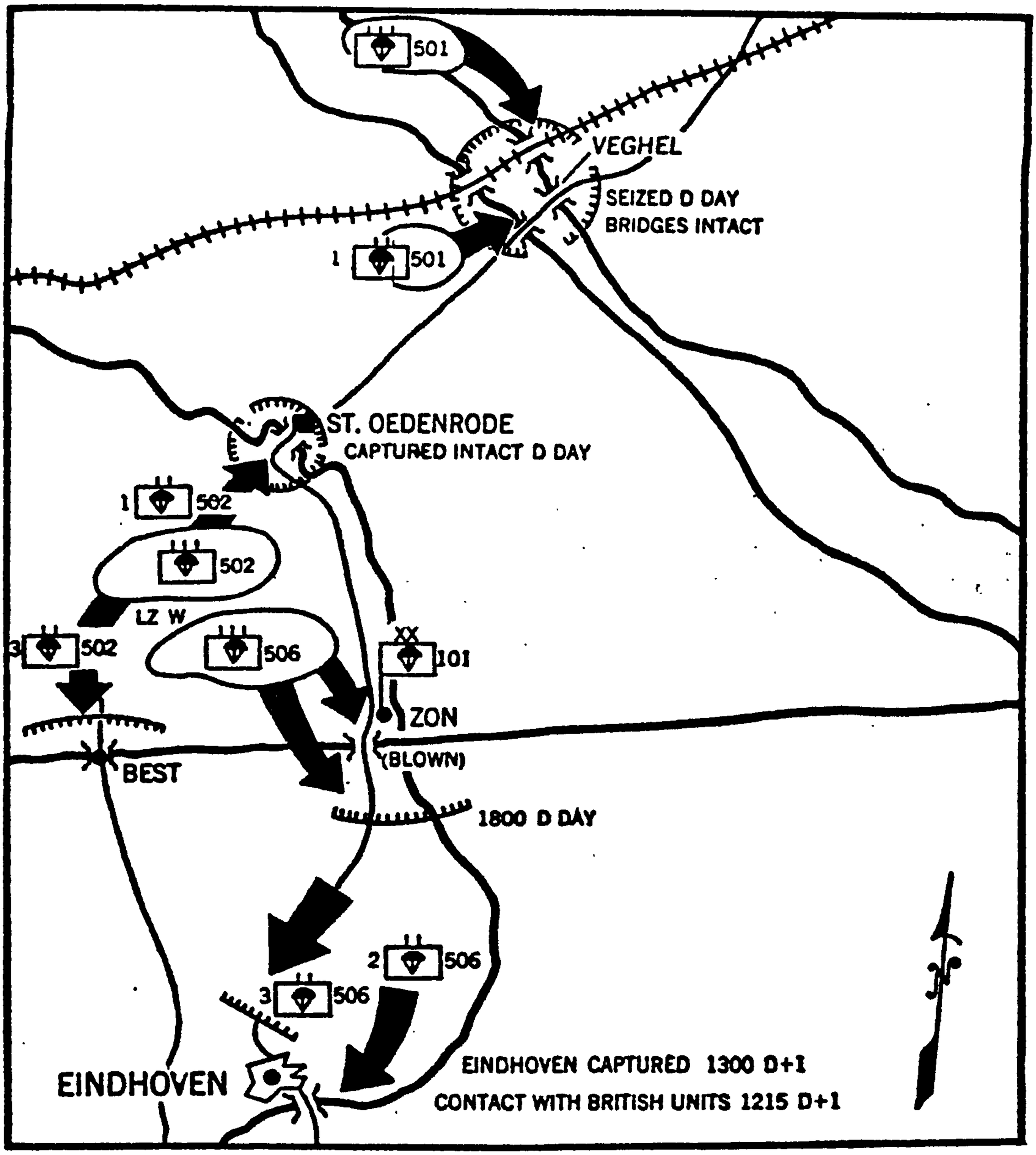


Figure 50 (referenced in Chapter 9)

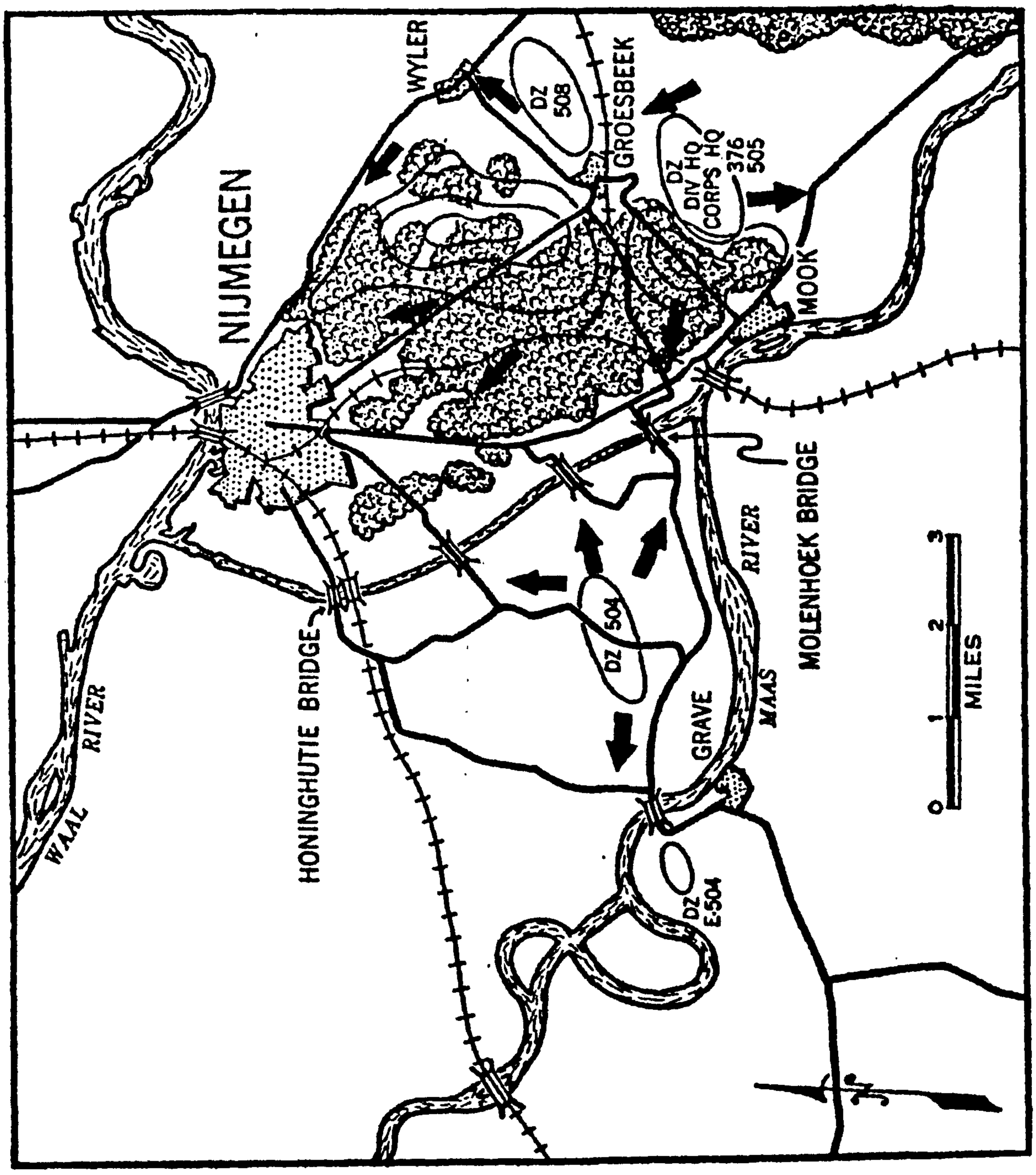


Figure 51 (referenced in Chapter 9)

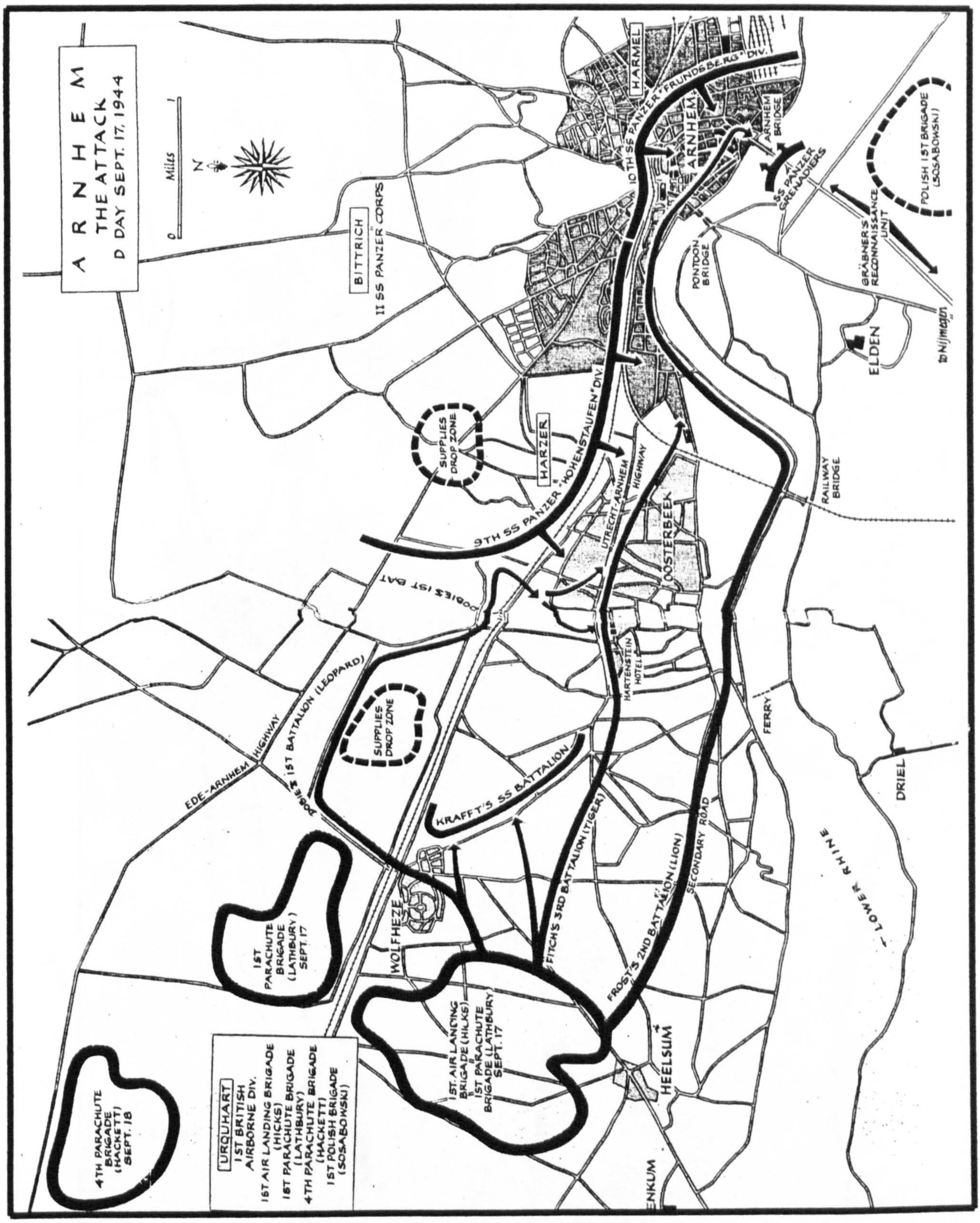


Figure 52 (referenced in Chapter 9)

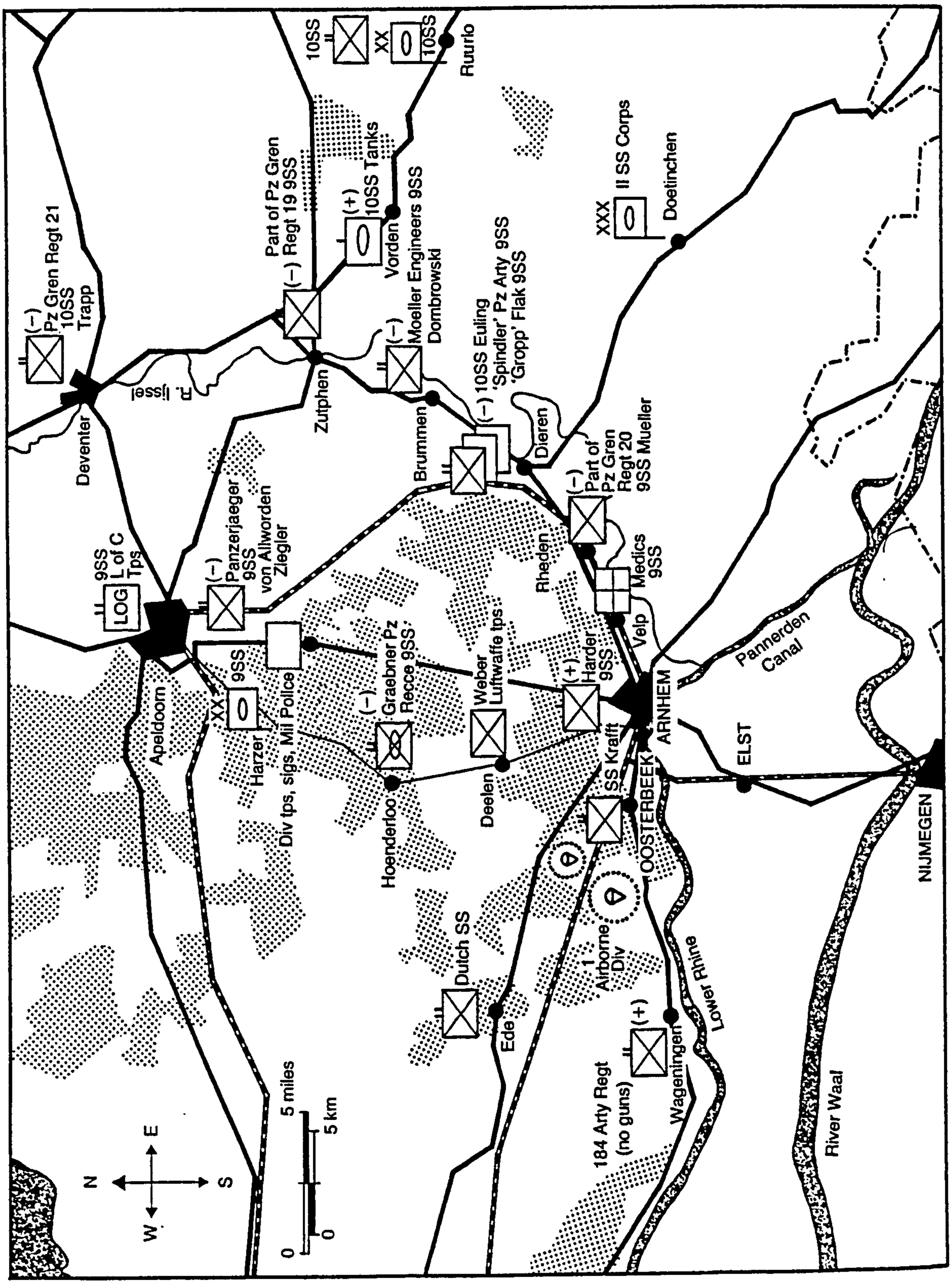


Figure 53 (referenced in Chapter 9)

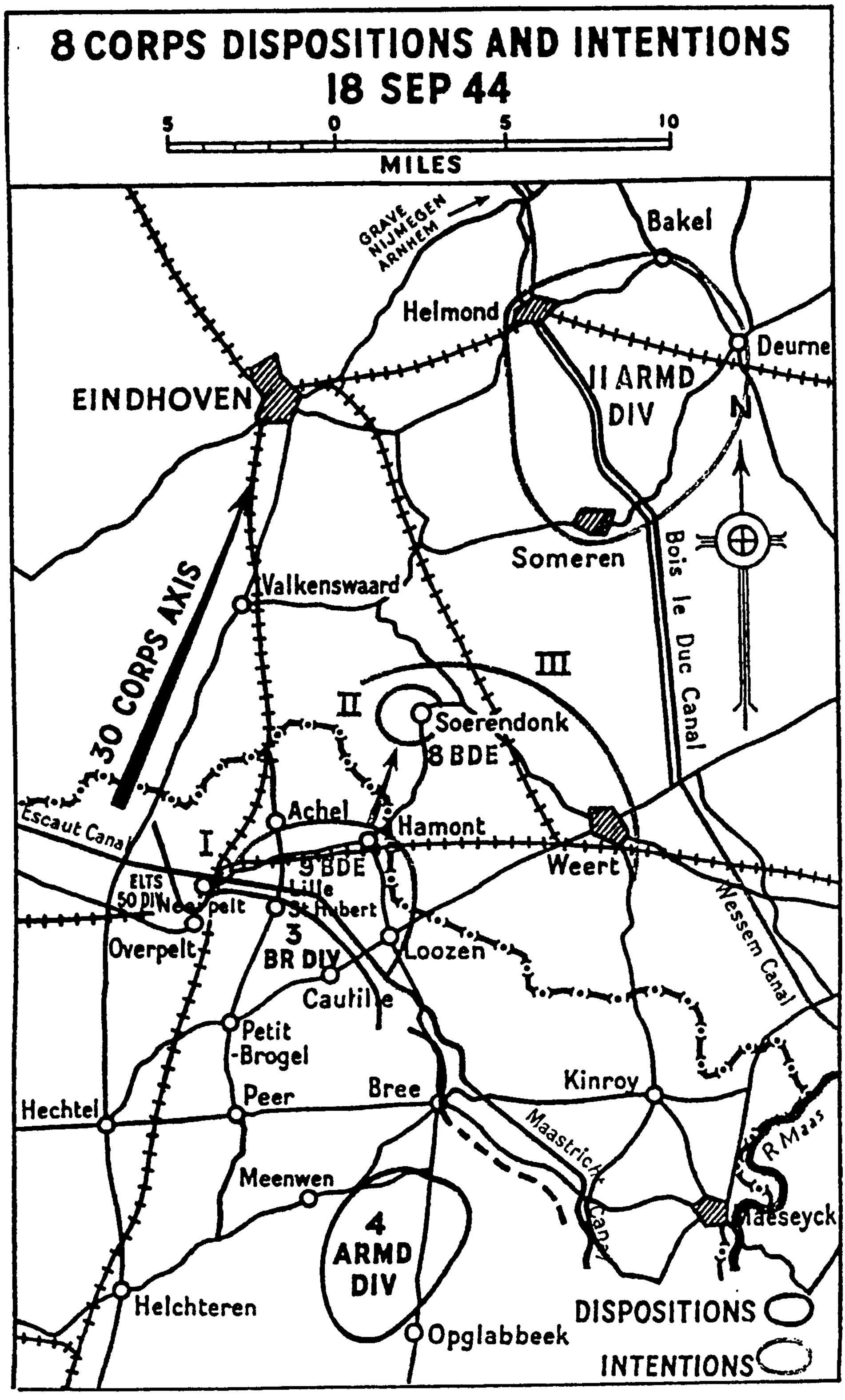


Figure 54 (referenced in Chapter 9)

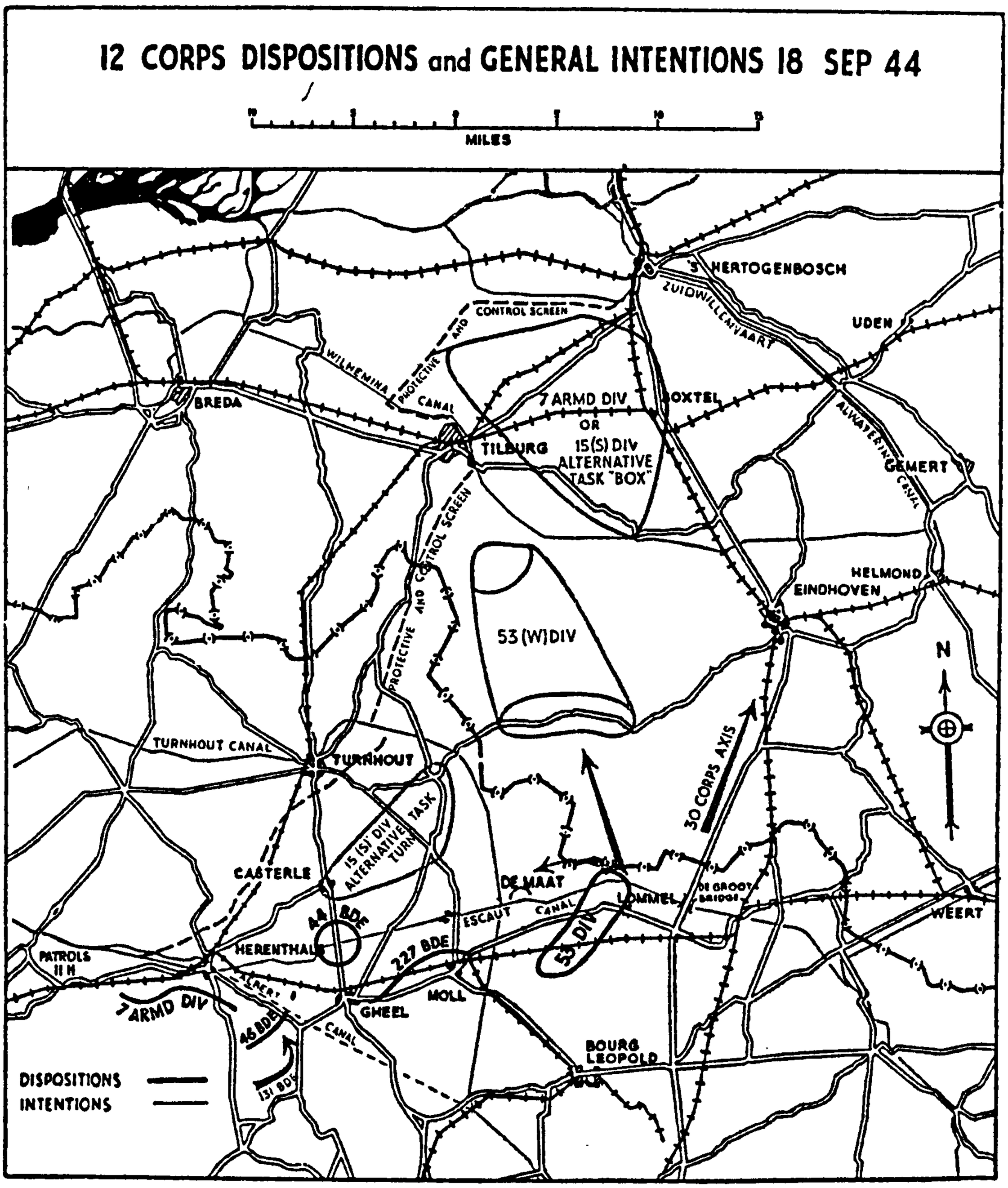


Figure 55 (referenced in Chapter 9)

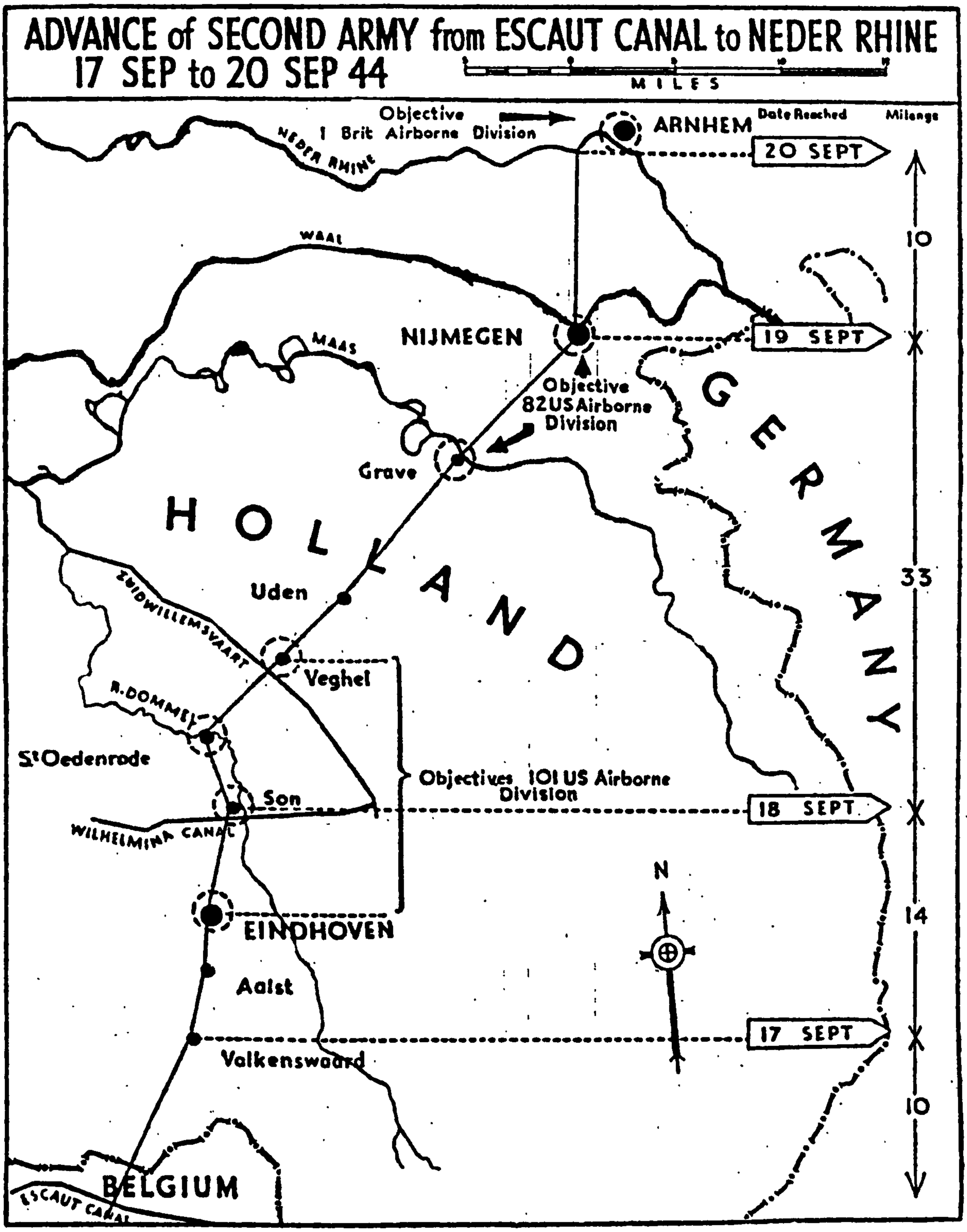
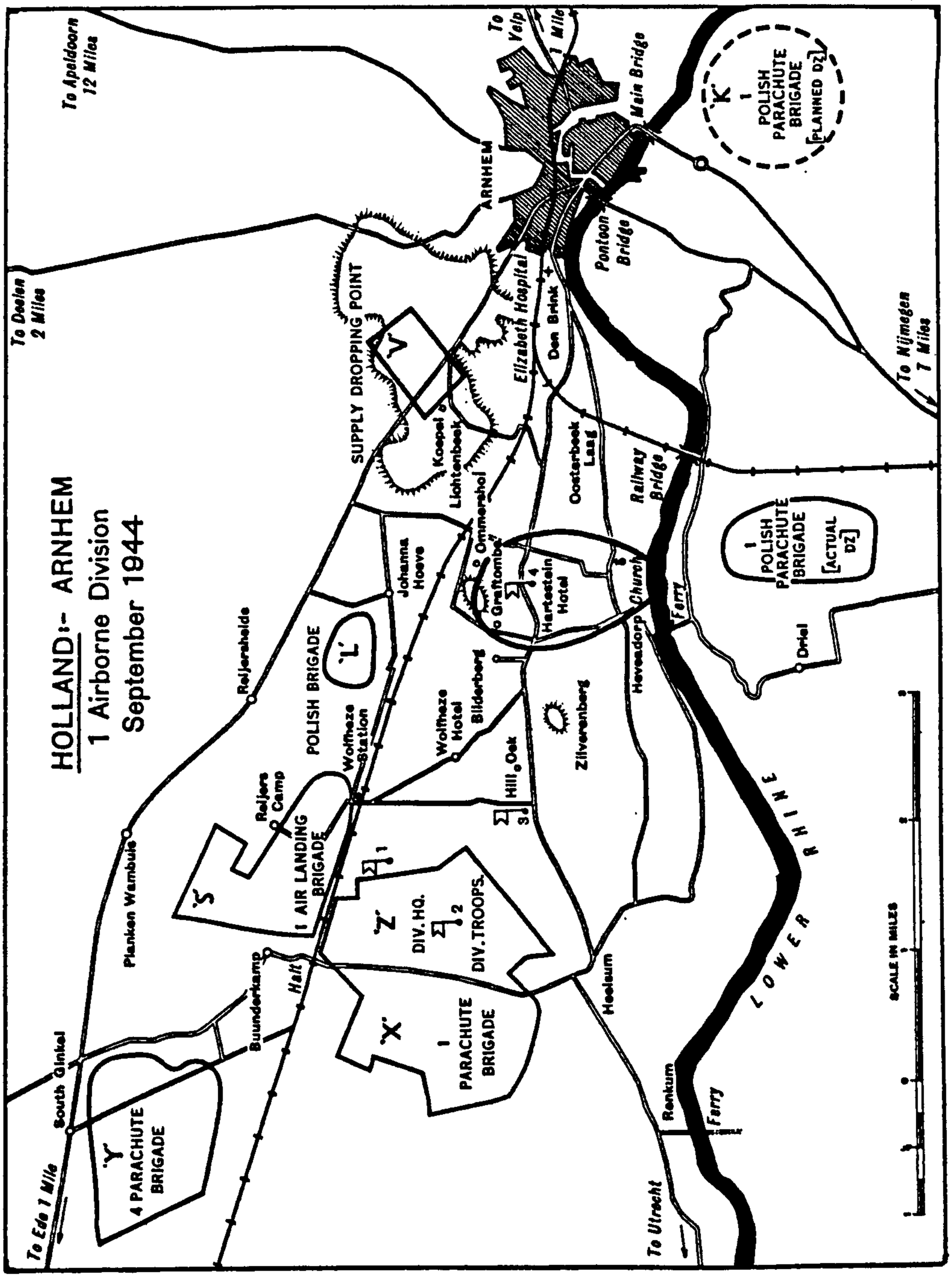
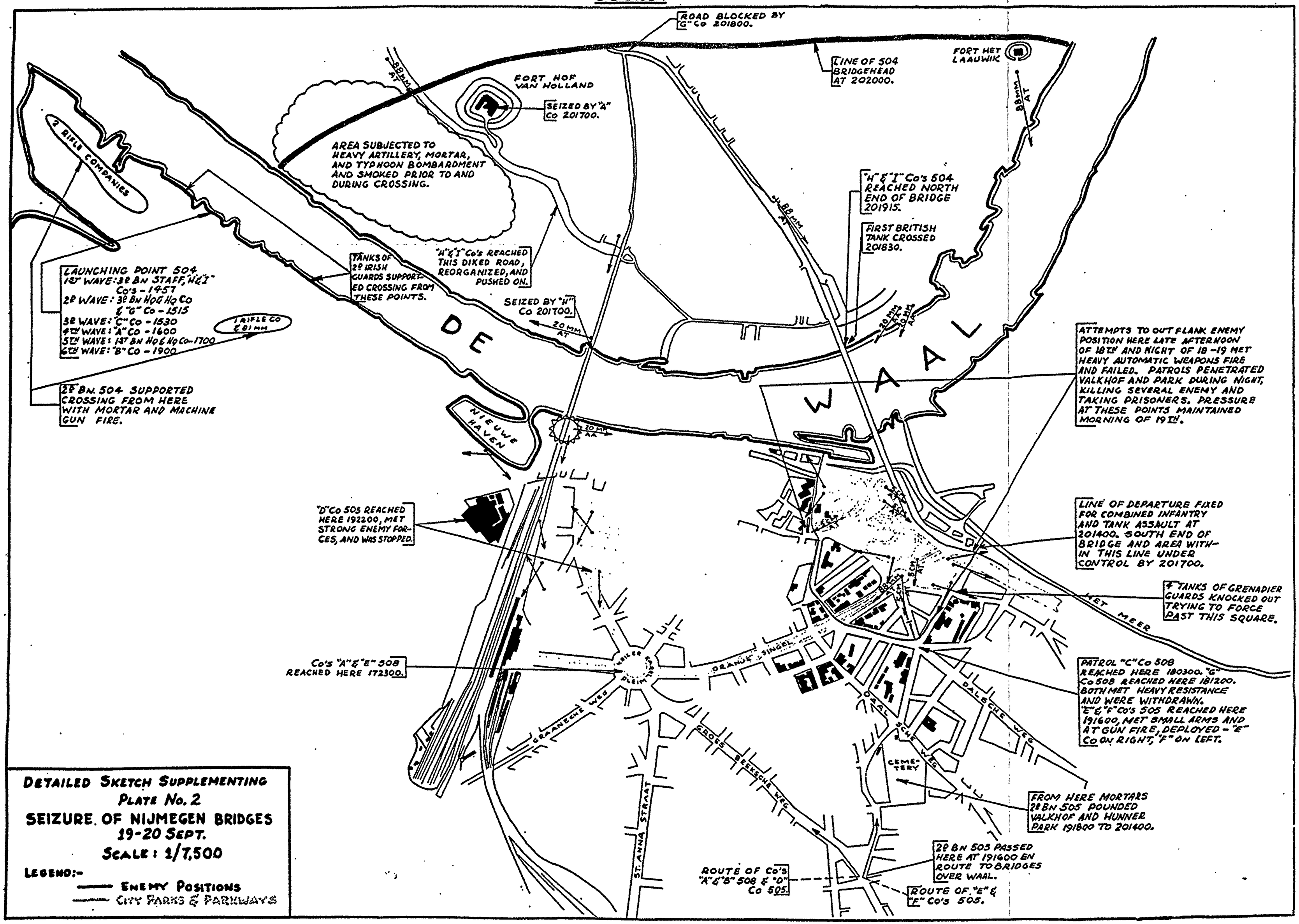


Figure 56 (referenced in Chapter 9)



SECRET



DETAILED SKETCH SUPPLEMENTING
PLATE No. 2
SEIZURE OF NIJMEGEN BRIDGES
19-20 SEPT.
SCALE: 1/7,500

LEGEND:-
— ENEMY POSITIONS
— CITY PARKS & PARKWAYS

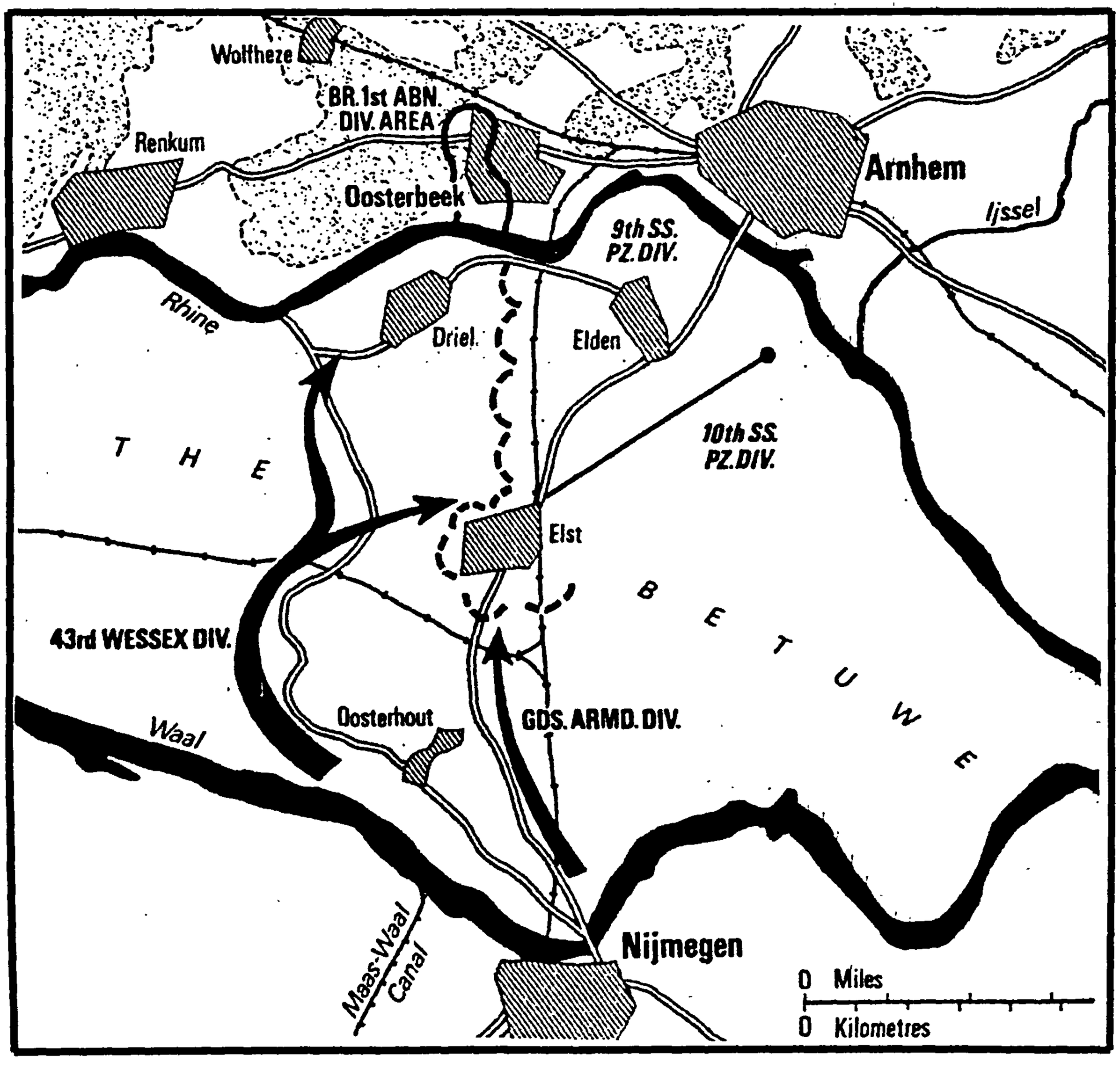

Wolfheze
BR. 1st ABN.
DIV. AREA
Renkum
Oosterbeek
Arnhem
Ijssel
9th SS.
PZ. DIV.
Rhine
Driel
Elden
10th SS.
PZ. DIV.
THE
Elst
BETUWE
43rd WESSEX DIV.
Oosterhout
GDS. ARMD. DIV.
Waal
Nijmegen
Maas-Waal
Canal
0 Miles
0 Kilometres

Figure 59 (referenced in Chapter 9)

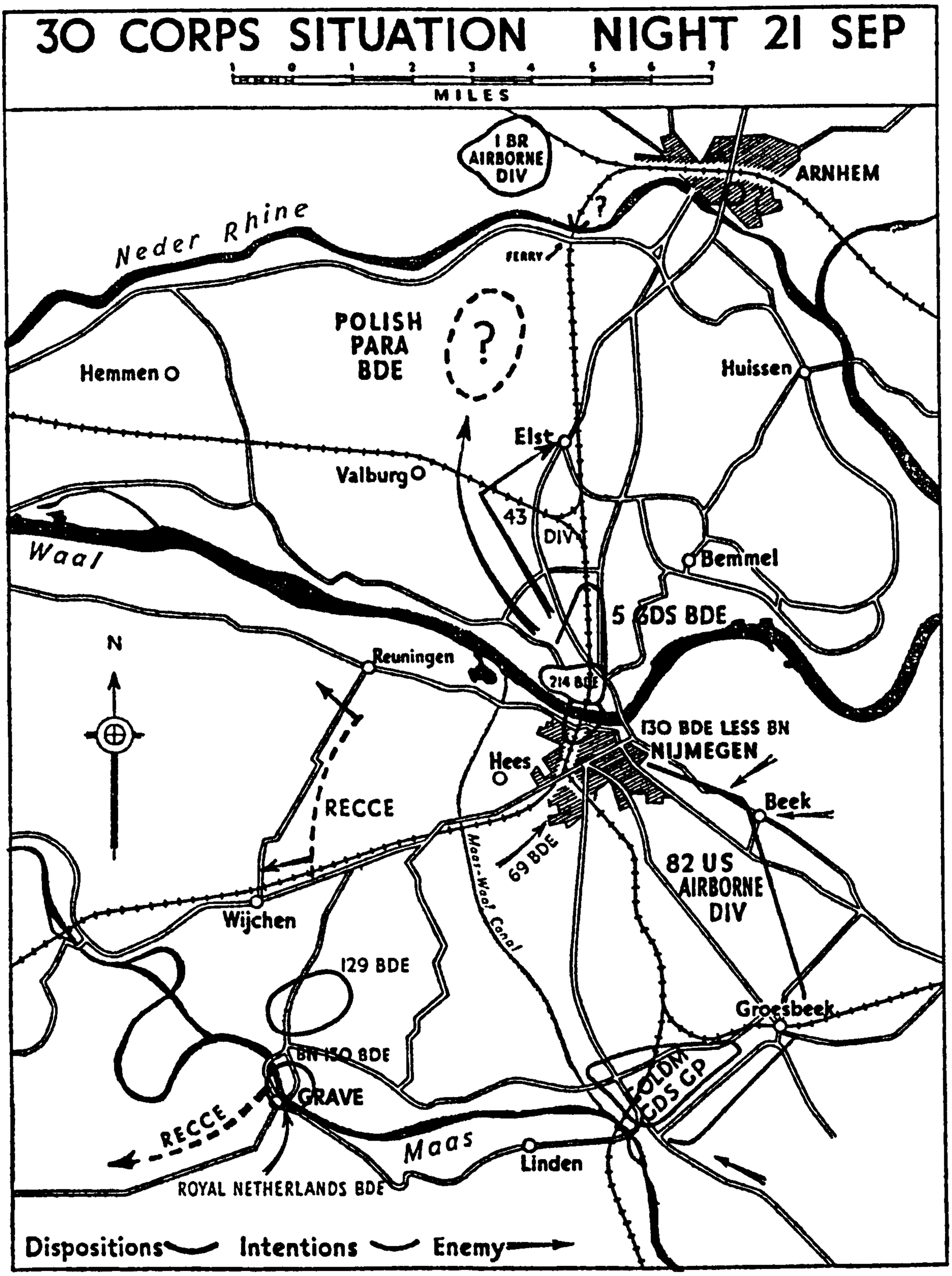


Figure 60 (referenced in Chapter 9)

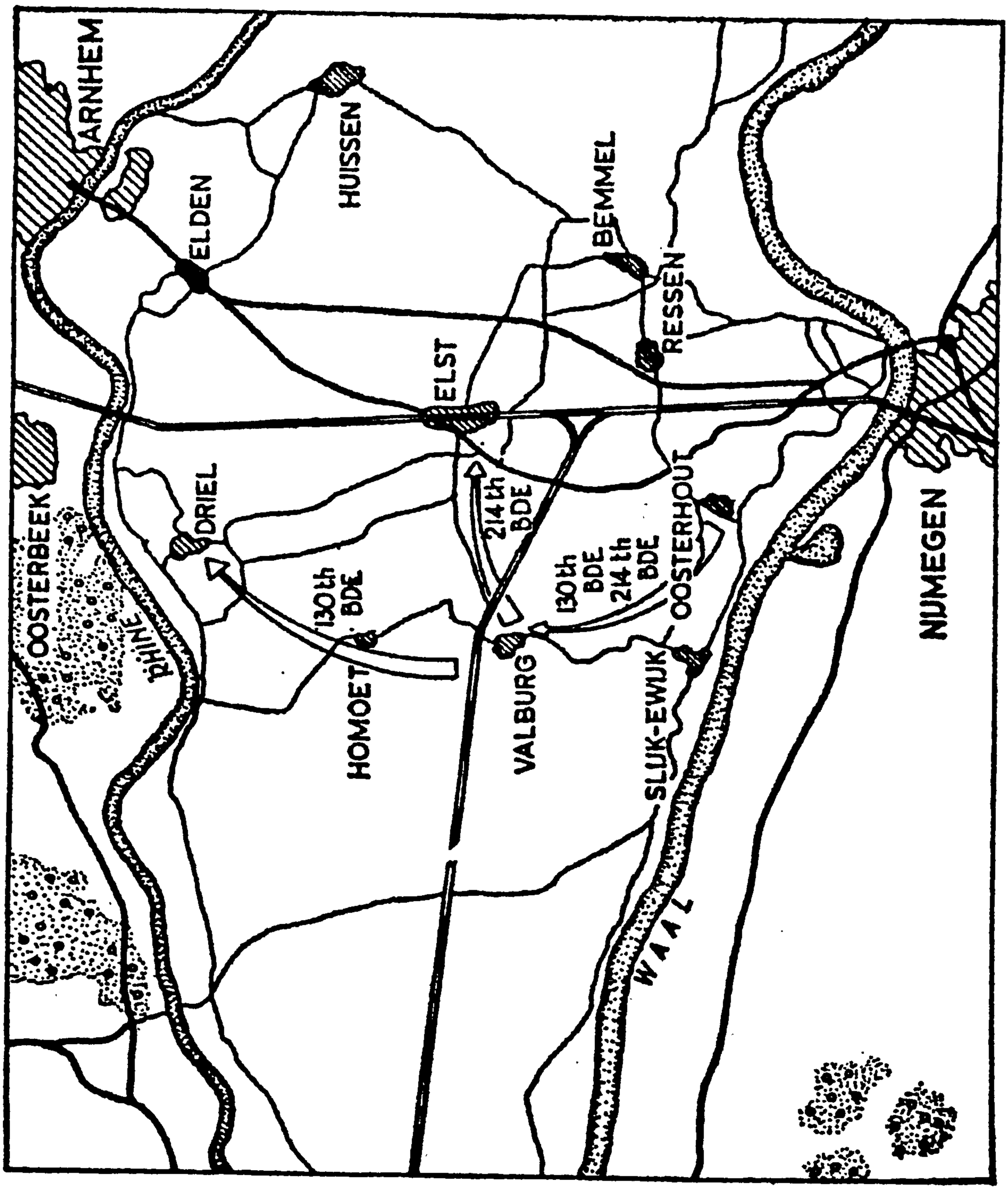


Figure 61 (referenced in Chapter 9)

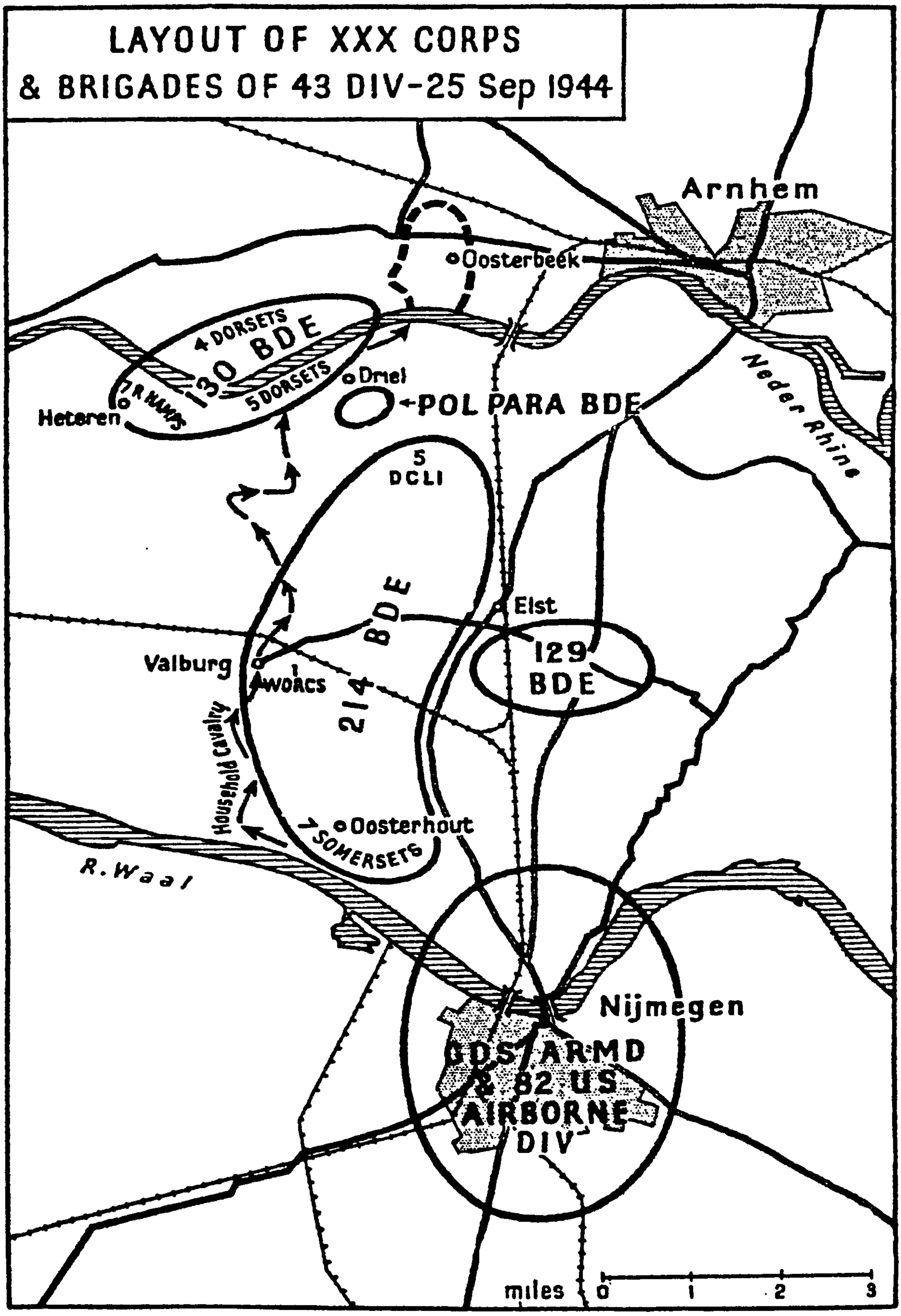


Figure 62 (referenced in Chapter 9)

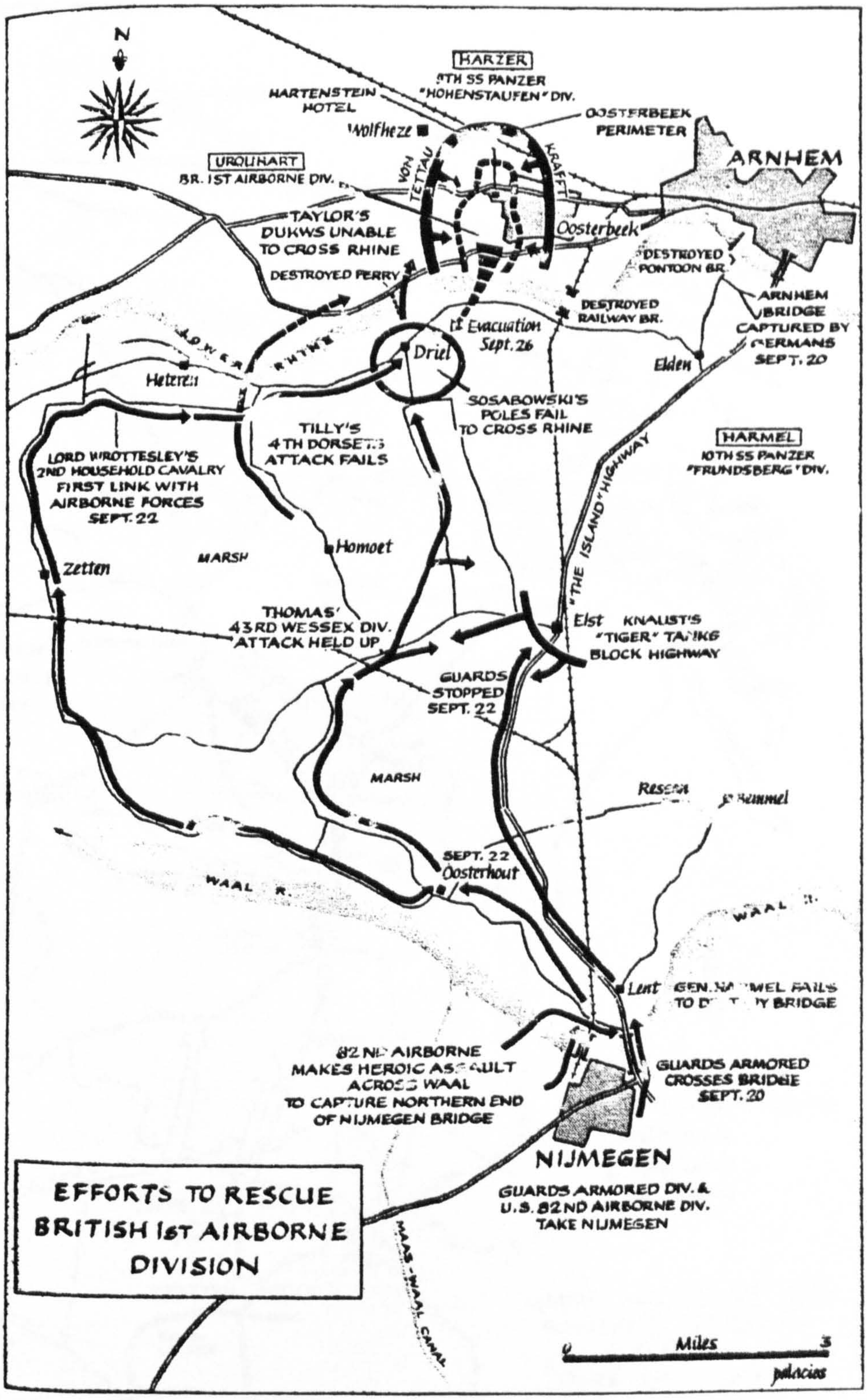


Figure 63 (referenced in Chapter 9)

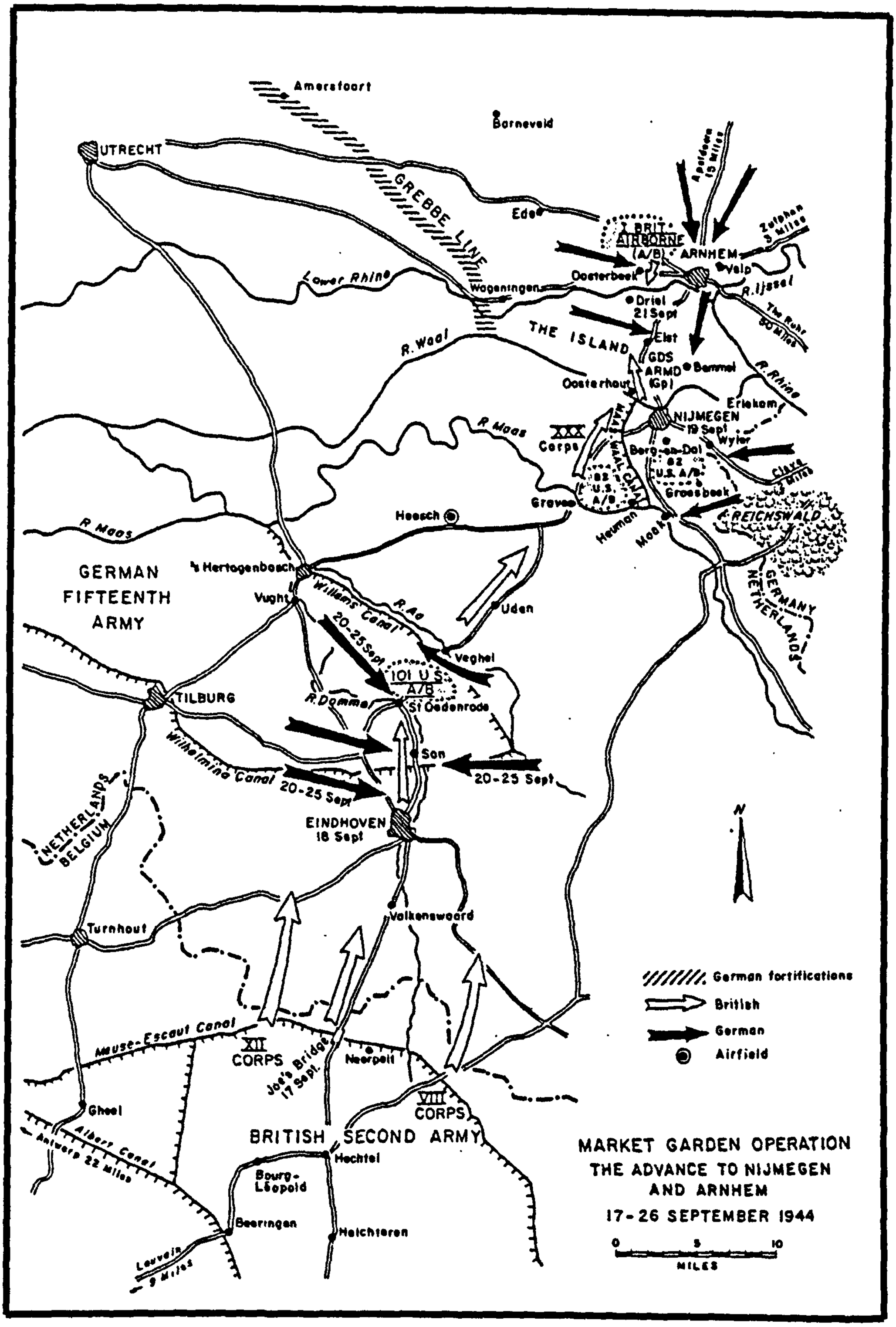


Figure 64 (referenced in Chapter 9)

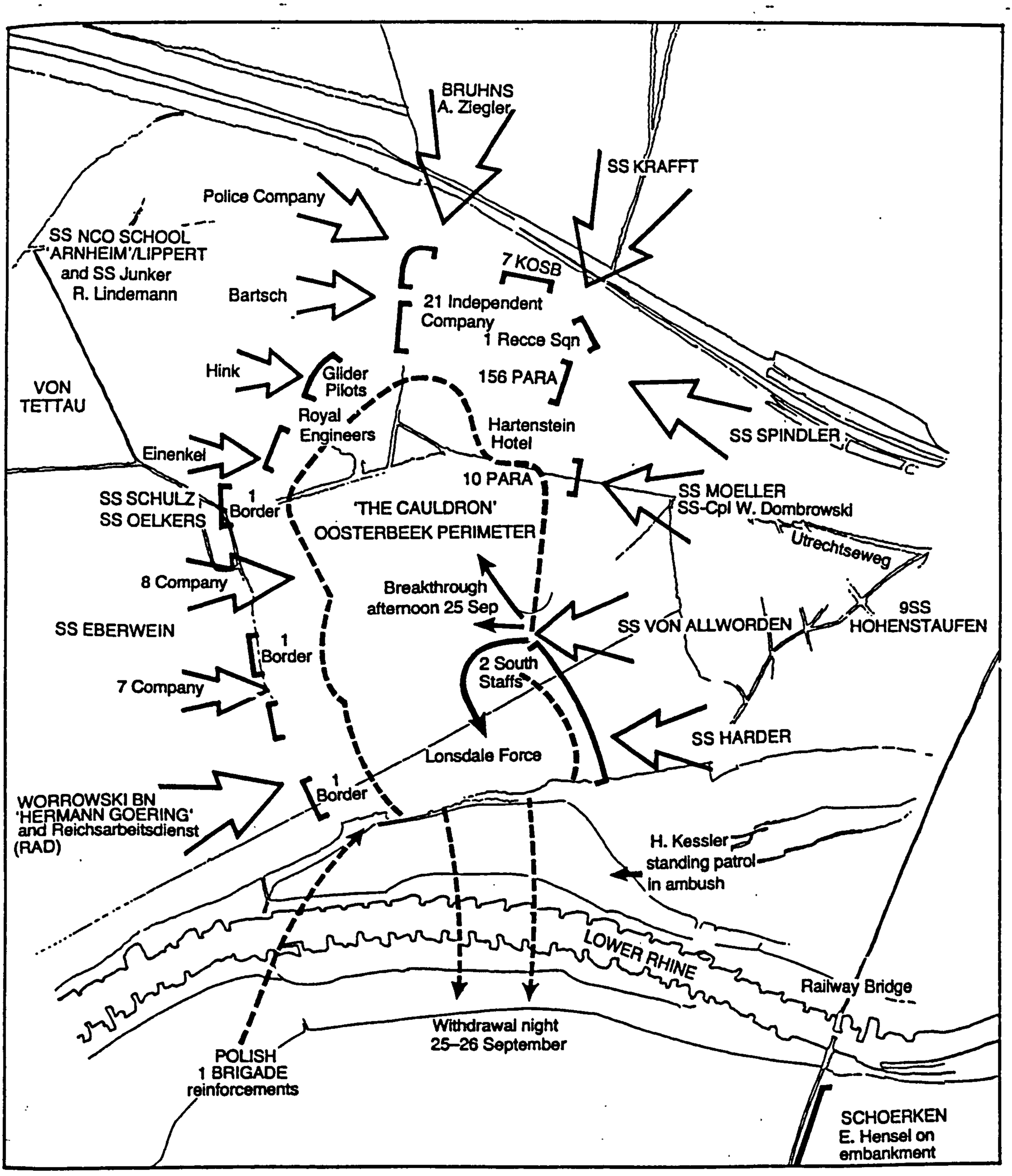


Figure 65 (referenced in Chapter 10)